

THE
CONVERSION
OF A
SINNER

Explained and Applied,
FROM

Ezek. 33. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your
evil wayes; for why will ye die, O house of
Israel?*

Part whereof was preached some
while since at Saviours Southwark.

THE
Day of Grace,
DISCOURSED OF
FROM

Luke 19. 41, 42. *If thou hadst known, even
thou, at least in this thy day, the things
which belong to thy peace! But now they
are hid from thine eyes.*

By Nathanael Vincent, Minister
of the Gospel.

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Explained and Applied

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Day of Grace 470 6
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The Dedication.

To his Sacred and most Glorious Majesty, the God of Heaven and Earth, the KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS; who is much more above the highest Potentates and Emperors in the World, than they are above their meanest Slaves!

Almighty Lord!



O Thee I dedicate my Book, to whom I have devoted my self, all that is good therein, it is thy own; and if it do any good, to Thee I must ascribe the praise. The Instrument indeed might be ashamed and discouraged

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couraged, if he did not know that thou canst work as well by weak means as by strong; nay, sometimes thou makest choice of weak on purpose, that flesh may not glory, but the excellency of the power may be of thee alone.

It was most free and rich Grace, (which Eternity itself will be shent enough to admire and adore) that I myself was pitied, who once lay as much polluted in my blood as any other; who had run so far in the broad way, and had sin'd my self so neer the destruction which is everlasting! But if I am not only made a Convert, but also made use of to convert others, my obligation will be heightened, which is infinitely vast already, to shew forth thy praise.

'Tis the desire of my soul, O Lord! that thy Kingdom may be advanced, and that the Dominion which sin and Satan have usurped may be overthrown. Since thy yoke is easie and thy government so sweet, so gracious, why should not thy subjects also be most numerous? Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, Oh, most mighty one! and ride forth conquering and to conquer; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Let thine arrows be sharp, and thy Word pierce like a two-edged sword; and let the whole world, either by conversion or subversion, but especially by conversion fall under thee!

The Dedication.

Thou art the God of the spirits of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for thee? When the Devil sinn'd against thee (and thereby became a Devil) thou didst easily throw him out of heaven, and shackle him in chains of darkness; and canst thou not as easily throw him out of those sinners hearts which he has possessed and filled, and pull down all his strong holds? And as for sin, though it be so mighty a thing, that Adam in innocency was overcome by it, that Angels in Heaven could not stand before it; yet thou art able, and hast promised to subdue it. Oh, shew thy power and Grace!

Since thy mercy is so great, why should there be so few partakers of mercy? Since thy Son is so able to save to the uttermost, why should so small a number be saved by him? Since the New Jerusalem is so spacious, why should Hell fill so exceeding fast? Oh, let thy special love be more generally manifested! Let thy healing and thy saving grace run in a much broader channel! Let thy tents be enlarged, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation! Let not so many souls be the Devils prey, which are of greater value than the world; and which are capable of loving, and admiring, and glorifying thee for ever! Answer, O my God, such desires as these, so far as consistent with the secrets of thy Counsel,

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and thy Wayes and Judgments, which are unsearchable and past finding out !

Let thy Gospel continue in this Land of England ! Let the Sun of righteousness shine forth in greater strength and glory, and dispel the mists of error, and chase away the night of Ignorance ! Let not the Sea be more full of water, than this Land of the knowledge of thy glory ! As long as there is a Church on earth, let there be a Church in England ! And let the Lamp of thy Word shine cleerly among us, as long as the Sun and the Moon shall shine in the Firmament !

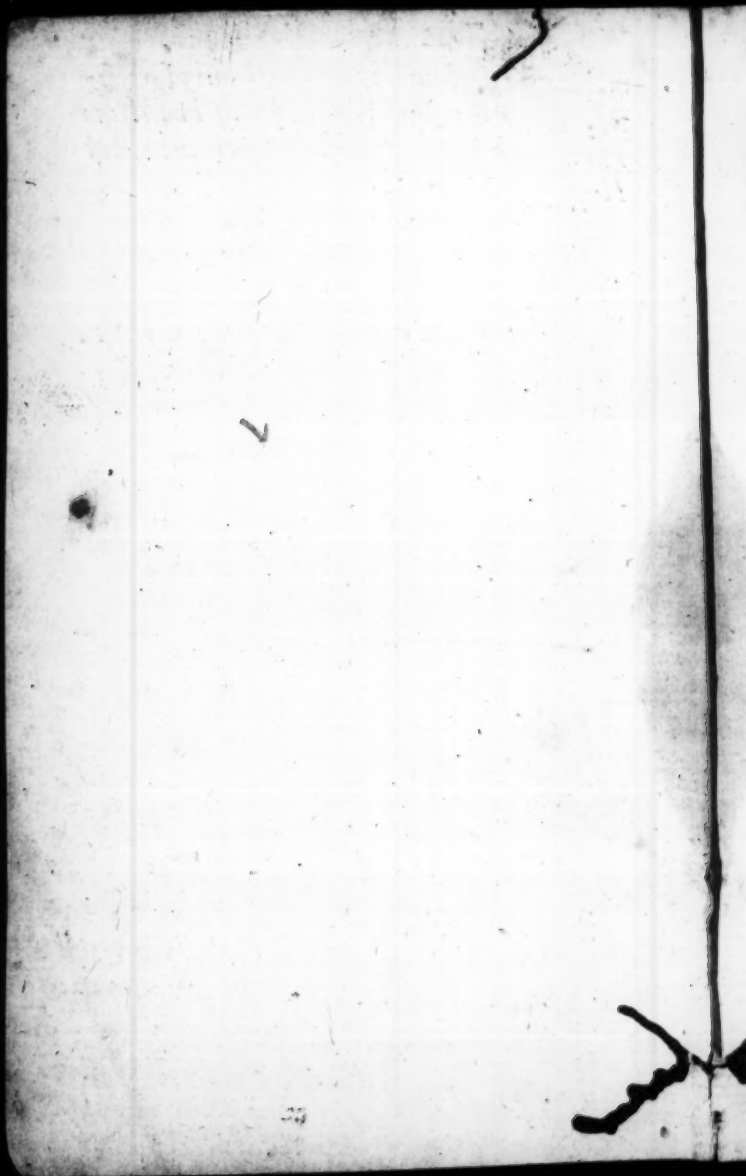
Thou who hast the hearts of all in thy own hand, incline some to read these following Sermons ; and let all that read be the better by them. Let them understand in this their day the things which concern their peace ! and obey thy Call to Turn, before thou comest to this Resolution to call and cry no more after them ! Oh, let none grow blinder by the light's shining in their eyes ! let none grow harder by the means which were design'd to soften them ! Let not the Word of Life prove unto any a deadly savour ! Let some souls date their conversion from their reading this Book ; and let those who are converted be further strengthened by it. Encourage thy servant more and more, by
making

The Dedication.

making his labours more abundantly successful, who has resigned and given up himself to Thee; and whose greatest Honour and truest Happiness it is to be,

Thine for ever,

NATHANAEL VINCENT.





THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER

Reader !



*AS soon as thou hast look-
ed on, immediately
look off again, and look
up to heaven !*

*How canst thou see to
read with any profit, unless the Father
of lights do open thine eyes and give
thee an understanding heart ? He can
shew thee wonders in the most commune
Truths, which before thou wert unac-
quainted*

To the Reader.

quainted with. Those doctrines that are most usually preached, as thy Judgment may yet more fully be informed about them; so I am sure thy affections have need to be stirr'd up to bear some more proportionable suitableness unto the weight and concernment of them.

It has moved my sorrow, and almost my indignation, to see how many Truths, because often (as 'tis needful) insisted on, are nauseated by some Professors. And yet alas these very Truths, though they have often heard them, they do not know them as they ought to know. As to any heart-affecting and operative knowledge, these persons who fancy and conceit themselves so very intelligent, are very grossly ignorant. Their consciences are stupid, and they were never brought under the power of the Word which is preached to them. Duties, though plainly and frequently pressed are neglected, and sins which they commonly hear reprov'd, are yet notwithstanding more communly given way to.

Thou

Thou who canst not like of a Discourse unless thy fancy be pleased, and thy itching ear clawed; what just reason hast thou to question, whether thy nature has been indeed renewed? for they who have been born again, desire the sincere milk of the word (though there be little mixture of what is humane) that they may grow thereby.

Reader! Art thou grossly ignorant and ungodly? How much then doth it concern thee to use those means which are appointed for the attaining of knowledge? Since without knowledge thy heart cannot be good; nor thou thyself in a safe estate. Thou art gone astray; Oh, Turn immediately, lest the next step thou takest, be into the Grave and Hell! 'Tis but small security not to perceive thy danger; 'tis but a pitiful happiness to be ignorant of thy misery, for this very ignorance increases thy danger, and will make thy misery the more unavoidable. Sin is such a thing as none ever repented of their parting
with;

with; therefore be perswaded to deny thy former ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously and godly in this present evil world.

If thou art a Professor, but not a practitioner of Religion; consider, 'tis not a feigned conversion, but a turning with the whole heart, upon which Life is promised and assured. If thou hast a form of godliness without the power, what does this prove but that thou hast more of the Atheist in thee. Surely thou thinkest the Lord does not regard, and will not punish, at least so thee he will be partial. I wonder how thou dar'st come so often into his presence, so neer his Ark where his jealousy is hottest, and so frequently engage in duties of his Worship; some sin or vanity all the while keeping thy heart away from him.

But if thou art indeed converted, Oh get neerer unto God, and turn more and more like to him. Grace is so excellent a thing, that methinks thou shouldst

shouldst be restlessly importunate for a greater measure of it. The more you follow on to know the Lord, the better you will love him, and the more unwilling you will be to leave him, and return again to folly.

Conversion is a nail which the Prophets of old were hammering upon perpetually. Our Lord and his Apostles endeavoured to drive this nail home. And God of late has not only sent his Ministers to ply this business, but has taken the hammer of judgments to make this nail to enter. Now the stronger the resistance is, we make, we must expect from this hammer the more strokes. We have seen lately dayes of great calamity and affliction, and yet they have in some sense been also dayes of grace. Therefore temporal judgments have been sent, that spiritual mercies might be prized, and eternal judgments might be prevented. God has had a design of love at the bottom of all his severities. Let us comply with it; for if we still walk

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walk contrary, he has threatned in fury to chastize us seven-fold more than as yet he has chastized us. And I may well tremble to think of those judgments which will be seven times worse than the Plague and Fire. But if we learn wisdom and instruction by his correction, and turn unto him that has smitten us, we shall find the expressions of his fauour and loving kindness, far greater than ever were the signs of his displeasure.

N. V.

The



THE
Conversion
OF A
SINNER:

EZEK. 33. 11. latter part.

*Turn ye, turn ye from your evil
wayes; for why will ye die, O
house of Israel?*

Is not very easie to discern whe-
ther Man discovered greater
folly in *departing* from God at
first, or whether his folly be
now more inexcusable in *refusing to return*

B

to

to him. *At first* he knew by blessed experience how good it was to be near his Maker, to enjoy the light of his countenance in the state of innocency; and yet he ventur'd to go away. *Now* he feels the effects of his Apostacy; for sin has loaded him with various miseries, calamities, vexations, and yet how hardly is he perswaded to come back again? The children of men are easily induced to yield to Satan, as if 'twere their interest to give themselves into the hands of a *Murderer*; but the Lord besides whom there is no Saviour, may call, and call with frequency, with earnestness, yet call in vain; their hearts are dull, their ears are deaf, they will not hearken to him. It can never be sufficiently lamented, that sin has made so many madmen in the world; *life and death, blessing and cursing* are set before them; yet death is chosen before life, the most astonishing and intollerable curses are embraced, when blessings of the highest, and most durable nature, are rejected.

*Proh superi! quantum mortalia pectora ceca
Noctis habent!*

Hence 'tis that the Lord expostulates

.. not

not only in reference to *sin*, but in reference to *punishment*: He not only says, *Why will you venture to transgress*; but also, *Why are you so forward to die, O house of Israel?*

The Prophet in the beginning of this Chapter, is by the Lord appointed a *Watchman* over the house of *Israel*; he is commanded to lift up his voice, when he sees the revenging sword drawn forth, and coming to cut the ungodly off for their ungodliness; and unless he call to the wicked to turn and live, he is accessory to their death, and their blood will be required at his hand. And being thus commissioned, he is commanded to stop the mouths of evil doers, who cavil and reply against their Maker, and charge God foolishly.

A Controversie it seems there was, at whose door the destruction of sinners is to be laid: The house of *Israel* very peremptorily and boldly lay the blame on God; they stick not to say, the way of the Lord is not equal. But the God of mercy, and of truth, does vindicate himself from that undeserved imputation; professing, that if sinners were not perversely bent upon their own ruin, destru-

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tion would be escaped. By his life he swears, that the death of the wicked pleases him not; therefore in the Text his voice is loud and doubled, *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil wayes*; and the saddle is set upon the right horse, mens own *Wills* are the cause of their own *Woe*. *Why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

The words express a very pathetic and serious call, wherein observe,

1. The persons called, *The house of Israel*.

2. To what they are called; they are called to *Turn*.

3. The urgency of this call, which appears in the doubling of it, *Turn ye, turn ye*.

4. From what they must turn, *from their evil wayes*.

5. The argument used to prevail, which has abundance of holy rhetorick in it; *Why will ye die?*

Without turning death is certain. Satan may say to the posterity, as once to the Parents, *Ye shall not surely die*; but this will be found true, *Those shall be turned into Hell*, Psal. 9. 17. who will not turn to God; thither 'tis that evil wayes have all a tendency. Several paths there are in the
broad

broad way, but in death, the second death, they all conclude and meet. Therefore the Lord is brought in, pitying of sinners, and pleading with them.

Why will ye die? Is it because I am speedy in revenging? you know I am slow to anger; and by experience have found me so, else my wrath had long e're this broken forth upon you; or is it because I am inexorable, not to be intreated when once provoked? Why, I have proclaim'd myself ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, unto all that call upon him. Or is it because you never heard of the way and means of recovering life, and flying from the punishment you have deserved? How often have I sent my Prophets, that you might be brought to believe, to repent, and to obey? But still your neck is as an iron sinew; you are resolved to rush on in sin. If you perish, you may thank your selves. If you are destroyed, 'tis because you chuse destruction.

Three Doctrines the Text affords us.

First, *That evil wayes are the wayes of death.*

Secondly, *The great reason why men die, and die for ever, is because they will.*

Thirdly, *The Lord does call and call again upon sinners to turn from their evil wayes and live.*

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Doct. 1. I begin with the first Doctrine, *That evil wayes are the wayes of death.* As they are *morally evil*; so *evil and destructive* to them that walk in them. Indeed these wayes may seem right, but because of this, they are not the less, but the more pernicious, *Prov. 14. 12.* *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the wayes of death.*

1. *These evil wayes do many times accelerate and hasten death temporal.* That was the sentence pronounced upon mans fall; *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* And how often by sin is the execution of that sentence speeded? We read of some not suffered to live out half their dayes, *Psal. 55. 23.* the reason is, because they live so wickedly. Those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, might have lived to possess the Land of Promise; but they sometimes *murmured*, sometimes they *commit idolatry*, sometimes *fornication*; and at last, the oath is sworn they should not enter into Canaan. The intemperate and unclean, how do they waste their strength? How many diseases do they punish themselves with? And though so miserably unprepared for judgment, hasten their departure out of this world to the tribunal of him, who judges righteously? *2. These*

2. *These evil wayes ; God who is our life is not to be found in : In a spiritual sense we are dead though alive, while we walk here. The Ephesians are said to be dead in trespasses and sin, while they walked according to the course of this world, and had their conversation in the lusts of their flesh, Eph. 2. 2, 3. If the life of the soul does consist in being united to God, in being animated and acted by his Spirit ; then iniquity that separates between God and us, Isa. 59. 2. must needs be granted a deadly thing.*

3. *These evil wayes are the beaten path to kells damnation, to that death which is everlasting. Never any came to hell but through these wayes ; and there is not one that continues to walk in them without conversion, but shall at last come thither. The enemy upon the pale horse without a second is deadful ; but when Hell follows immediately after him ; alas ! what hand can be strong ? what heart can be able to endure ? This second Death is by one of the Fathers called $\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\circ\varsigma\ \alpha\iota\omega\nu\alpha\iota\circ\varsigma$, *The death that is immortal ;* because the sinner is never put out of his pain, alwayes tortured, but never quite dispatched ; the fire burns still, but never totally consumes them whom it burns ; the worm still gnaws, but is never satisfied.* *VVbi-*

Whither away besotted and blinded soul? whither is it thou art making such post haste? Is it gain, delight, and happiness which thou hast in chase, that thou seemest rather to flie than run towards it? Alas no; 'tis in the broad way that thou drivest on so furiously; 'tis not gain, but loss; 'tis not pleasure, but pain; 'tis not an happiness, but misery; ay, and the extreamest misery which thou art pursuing. Oh stop thy course and go no further! Oh leave this lower path, Prov. 15. 24. The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

You see in what respects evil wayes are the wayes of death. Now, the righteousness of God, in punishing those with death that persist in these wayes, will be evident, if these things following are considered.

1. *These wayes are expressly forbidden by him that is the supream Law-giver; who has power to save, and to destroy; and for so mean a wretch as man is, to affront and despise, that Majesty and Authority that is so infinitely high above him, does justly deserve an infinite punishment. Besides, the Lord proffers himself to a sinner, if he will forsake his evil wayes and thoughts: Now if the sinner reject that offer, and prefer not only the empty world, but the vilest lusts before*

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before the blessed God, let reason judge if it be not just; that he should eternally be separated from him. And this *pœna damni*, loss of God, is most properly the death spoken of, 'tis indeed the very Hell of Hell.

2. *Sinners are threatened with death*; if therefore they will venture upon that which brings them under the lash of the threatnings, 'tis but just they should smart for that presumption: They are forewarned to flee from that wrath which is to come; but if they take no warning, that wrath will very justly overtake them. They cannot plead, either that they knew not their Masters will; or that they were ignorant of the penalty following upon their rebelling against it. How often have those that enjoy the light of the Gospel, been informed that 'tis the will of God they should sorrow and rend their hearts for sin; that 'tis the will of God they should believe in his Son; that 'tis the will of God even their sanctification, *1 Thes. 4*. Nay, how often have they been foretold of the many stripes that must be endured by those that continue in wilful disobedience? 'Tis not unequal then, since they made the Lord a lyar by their unbelief, that he should vindicate his truth,

truth, and cause them to feel those plagues and torments which thousands of times they were warned of; but had no faith or fear concerning them.

3. As sinners are threatned because of their evil wayes, so they are shewed which is the way of life and peace, and very much pressed to walk in it. Assisting and strengthening grace is profered to them; but if neither that glory and immortality at the end of the way, nor that help and grace which they may have in the way, are regarded; but the paths of destruction and misery (as they are called) Rom. 3. 16. are preferred; they themselves indeed do wrong their own souls; but God is righteous in destroying them.

The only use I shall make of this Doctrine, is to caution you against these evil wayes, that are the wayes of death. You that have through grace left them, take heed of declining towards them. It has cost the Saints dear, when they have stept aside; their falls have defiled them and broken their bones. And you that still resolve to walk in these wayes, at last open your eyes, and see whither you are going. Upon the reading these lines, make a stop without delay, lest sudden death, sudden destruction,

*struction, sudden damnation come upon you,
and there be no possibility of escaping,
1 Thes. 5. 3.*

*1. Let not the profit of these wayes blind
you. Riches are deceitful, they appear
what they are not, and while we are
eagerly pursuing these, we are gulled and
cheated of far truer riches; we miss of
that treasure in heaven that will never fail,
Luk. 12. 33. Be not deluded by the un-
righteous Mammon; satisfaction, ease,
contentment may be promised; but you
will be paid in trouble and vexation.
Riches are likened by our Lord to *Thorns*,
partly because they *choak* the good seed
of the Word, and partly because they
pierce those that doat upon them with ma-
ny sorrows. Take the *ballances* of the
sanctuary, and weigh the gain that you get
by walking in your evil wayes, with the
loss that you both do and will sustain; and
then 'twill be apparent, that Satan's and
the heart's plea of profit is very unreason-
able. You gain *earth*, but you lose *grace*; you
gain *gold*, but you lose *God*; you gain a
little of the world, which you can keep
but a *very little while*, but you lose your
souls, and an *whole eternity of glory*.*

*2. Let not the pleasure of these evil wayes
ensnare*

ensnare you; the pleasures of sin usually delight only the more brutish part of man; and how much does one that has a reasonable soul act below himself, in minding those pleasures that are common even to the beasts themselves? Solomon had an abundance of them, *Whatever his eyes desired he kept not from them, neither withheld he from his heart any joy*; but he found them so mean, so low, so unsuitable, that in the midst of them he cries out, *All is vanity and vexation of spirit*, Eccles. 2. 10, 11. Pleasures are delightful dreams, but how short are they, how soon does affliction, death, if not Hell awaken us? They that are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, how inconsiderate are they what they chuse, or what they refuse? Pleasures are the baits which cover sin, and make it swallowed down with eagerness; they are the fatal potion which stupifies the soul, and makes it lye senseless and helpless in extreme danger; they are the finer, and yet most strong cords, whereby Satan draws men down to the chambers of death; nay, they are the fuel that heat the burning lake, Rev. 18. 7. By how much she hath glorified her self and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her. Oh, how will the
the

the voluptuous one day smart for all their pleasures!

3. *Let not the multitude of those who walk in these evil ways confirm and harden you. Lot walked alone in the way of righteousness, though Sodom was generally defiled by an ungodly conversation; he would not follow a multitude to do evil. He that said, Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it, Mat. 7. surely never intended his Disciples should go in the beaten path of the world. Sinner, deceive not thy self with this, Thou dost what others do, and thou shalt shift as well as they. Thou and they will fare alike indeed; that is, be turned into hell for your wickedness. 'Twill be no comfort there to have companions in thy misery; but rather among the damned, there will be a torturing grief and indignation at the sight one of another, to consider what incarnate devils they were to one anothers souls, and helped forwards one anothers condemnation. Upon this score it might be that the rich man, Luk. 16. was so unwilling his brethren should come to the place of torment, because if damned for those sins which he in his lifetime had been accessary to; their company*

will

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with him in Hell would have but added to his woe. We use to say here, *The more, the merrier*; but there 'twill be, *The more, the sadder*. When God has *all his enemies* in one place together; and none of his people mingled with them, then *all his wrath* will be stirred up, and all the vials of his fury poured down upon them. I have done with that first Doctrine, *That evil wayes are the wayes of death.*

Doct. 2. The second Doctrine is this : *The great reason why men die & die for ever, is because they will.* They will be the servants of sin, though death be all the wages they shall certainly have for all their toylsome and laborious service. Sinners will not be purged, Jer. 13. u't. *Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* They will not be gathered under the wing of Christ, though there only be the place of refuge, both from the rage of Satan, and from the wrath of God, Mat. 23. 37. *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as an Hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not?* Nay, the wills of many, who have often slighted the admonitions and
calls

calls of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, are so desperately bent to sin, that though themselves should see the *flames* and *torments* it makes others suffer; yet they would not be perswaded to forsake it, *Luk. 16. 30, 31.* Nay, *Father Abraham*, but if one went to them from the dead they will repent; and he said unto him, If they hear not *Moses* and the *Prophets*; neither will they be perswaded, though one rose from the dead.

My work in the opening of this Doctrine, will be first to demonstrate the truth of it, *That men die because they will.* Secondly, to evidence that mens inability to what is good, so often spoken of in Scripture, does not at all contradict this doctrine.

The Arguments to demonstrate that mens own wills are the great cause of their death and perdition, are these.

1. One Argument shall be drawn from the natural corruption and depravation of the will of man. And wherein does this corruption lye, but in the wills declining from God, the fountain of life and peace, and inclining to what is evil? Though the sinner (wo unto him) does call that evil good; and imagins that to be sweet, which will prove as bitter and poysonous as the very gall of asps unto him. *Pelagians* may liken

likethe will of man unto a pure *Virgin*, which in the first Apostacy did escape *deflowering*; but certain it is, both from Scripture and experience, that in the *will*, *original sin* does most of all shew it self. He that does not understand *his heart* to be *desperately wicked*, Jer. 17. 9. 'Tis a sign his heart deceives him, and with his heart he is utterly unacquainted. What unbelief, what pride, what alienation from the life of God, what enmity against the command, which is holy, just, and good, Rom. 7. is there in the will of a natural man? The will then being so deeply corrupted, and bearing such sway as indeed it does, must needs hinder conversion to God, and holiness, which it so much dislikes; and consequently have a great hand in the perdition of the children of men.

2. Another Argument shall be drawn from the *justness* of God's reproofs and anger. Certainly he would not so sharply reprehend them; his anger would not so smother against them, because of their stubbornness and wilfulness in their evil wayes, if they had a *sincere will*, and only wanted *power* to do that which is good. When the Lord inflicted judgments upon his ancient people, he speaks of their *obstinacy*, their *refusing*

refusing to hearken, and to be reclaimed; and this he does to vindicate the equity of his severer wayes of dealing with them. We read, 2 King. 17. 13, 14, 18. That the Lord testified against Israel by his Prophets and Seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil wayes, and keep my commandements. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardned their necks like unto the neck of their fathers, which did not believe in the Lord their God; now upon this wilfulness followed, and that very justly, God's anger and their destruction. Therefore the Lord was very angry with the children of Israel, and removed them out of his sight.

In the second place, I am to prove, That *mens inability* to do that which is good, does not *thwart* this Doctrine, that their sin and misery is to be laid at their wills door. The Holy Ghost that he might *humble* the children of men, and beat down the *opinion* they have of their *own power* and *righteousness*, and make them use that speech of the Prophet, *Isa. 45. 25. Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, does inculcate this, that man in his sinful & degenerate state is unable to that which is spiritually good; therefore we are said to be *without strength*, Rom. 5. 6.

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We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God, 2 Cor. 3. 5. We are said to be faint, and to have no might, Isa. 40. 29. And our Lord tells us plainly, Job. 15. 5. Without me ye can do nothing. But for all this, though we want a power to do good, our wills are to be blamed for the evil which is done by us. It must not be imagined that the Scripture mentions sinners inability to do good, to put an excuse into their mouths, for their doing of evil; but to drive them to Christ, who can strengthen them to do all things, Phil. 4. 13. 'Tis true, man is unable, but withal he is unwilling to do what God requires of him, though tending to his own welfare. The reason why he continues in sin, and is undone by it, is not only because he cannot convert himself, but also, and that principally, because he is unwilling to be converted. This will be made further to appear in these particulars.

1. Sinful man *imagines himself able to turn from his evil wayes; he defers his repentance, as if he could turn to God at an hours warning: Now that he does not, what he thinks he can; his own will must be the impediment, and this he must blame, if so be he perishes.*

2. Sinful man *will not do what he is really able to perform*; one talent he has, but he will not trade with it; many sins that expose him to wrath and vengeance, he might abstain from, if he would; but alas! he is voluntarily a slave to them, and is pleased with this servitude. The Adulterer *wilfully* goes to the Harlots house, the unrighteous worldling *wilfully* gets dishonest gain; therefore it follows, that these *wilfully* destroy themselves. A natural man can do that which is good, as to the matter, though he fail in the manner of doing: He can pray, hear, read; but he *wilfully* omits these duties; and so *wilfully* subjects himself to the curse that's threatned upon his omission. He will not do what he really can; and then surely if his power were enlarged, it would not be used. He that can well spare it, and refuses to give a penny to the poor, we may conclude, that though he could spare it, he would be unwilling to give a pound: In like manner a natural man, who will not do what he can to be saved, which is but little, were his power greater, he would not do more in order to salvation.

3. Sinful man is *sorry that he is able to do*

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so much, he wishes that he were totally impotent, that so it might serve as an excuse for him. This shews the wickedness of his will. Further, he will not use the means by which grace and strength from heaven are conveyed; he will not wait and call on God, he will not seek unto him for the accomplishing of the promises made in the gracious Covenant. Nay, he wilfully resists the Spirit when he comes to work upon him; he had rather be let alone in sin. That's the language of ungodly ones, *Job 21. 14. They say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* The wicked man, though he may cavil that he wants power; yet his want of will to be turned and live, is that which mainly ruins him. And all those high thoughts and reasonings against God, as if he were an hard Master, as if his wayes were not equal, at the great day, how will he be ashamed of them? When conscience shall flie in his face, and in good sadness reproach him with this; He was often warned and called upon, but would not turn that he might have life.

The Application follows.

Use 1. Of Information in these particulars.

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1. Do men die for ever because they will? *Then who art thou, O man, that chargest God with thy destruction?* Surely herein thou chargest God foolishly; as he delights not in thy sin, so neither in thy death. The malefactor must not be angry with the Judge for passing a sentence of condemnation upon him, but he ought to blame himself for doing that for which he deserves to be condemned. *How often has the Lord called but you have refused, how often has he stretched forth his hand, all the day long, but all the day long you have been disobedient and gainsaying?* Rom. 10. ult. How speechless will this make you, when he comes to judge the world in righteousness?

2. Do men die for ever because they will? *Then the death of the wicked is most just and righteous.* 'Tis but equal that the willing slaves of sin, that would not become the Lords freemen, should be fettered in chains of darkness. The offender that refuses a pardon offered, justly, nay, doubly deserves to have judgment executed, both because of *his offence*, and because he *slights mercy*. The Patient who thrusts away the Physician, who would heal him of a sore distemper, very well deserves

serves to die for it; and the sinner who will not turn to God, who rejects the Lord Jesus, who is able both to pardon and to heal him; though he perish and be condemned, yet he is not in the least wronged.

3. Do men die for ever because they will? *What a torture will it be to them in Hell, to think it was their own wilfulness which brought them thither.* Such kind of reflections as these will be as so many poysoned daggers to pierce the very soul of a damned reprobate. *What ailed me to prove a devil to myself! what ailed me to side with Satan, for the bringing about my own destruction! what phrenzy was this, to make the whips my self, wherewithal I am to be lashed! to kindle the flames with my own hands; in which I must dwell and burn for ever!*

Use 3. Shall be of Caution: Take heed of wilful sinning, which is the high road leading to death. Take heed also lest you content your selves with a seeming willingness to escape destruction.

1. Let me caution you against wilful sinning. The more of the will is in transgression, the more of provocation; therefore David is so earnest to be kept from presumptuous sins which he knew, because presumptuous

sumptions to be so great, Psal. 19. 13. In a Land and time of light, take heed of being wilfully ignorant: In the midst of helps and encouragements to duty, take heed of sloth, which is a fault of the will; but be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Heb. 6. 12. Let no sin be loved, pleaded for, lived in; let not the pleasing taste make thee venture upon any forbidden fruit; let not the fine-coloured skin make thee to hug any Serpent in thy bosom, which will sting thee to death.

2. Let me caution you against *that which is only a seeming willingness to turn from sin, and escape destruction.*

1. *An idle unindustrious will, is only a seeming will.* A lazy wish to be saved, where there is no serious using of the means of salvation, signifies nothing, but that you are grossly ignorant and stupid, ignorant of the worth of salvation, and stupidly unsensible of your own danger.

2. *A will for the future is only a seeming will.* Most of them who go on in their evil ways, have a will to leave them hereafter; but this only shews their present unwillingness. And if you are backward to turn now, you are likely hereaf-

ter to be more averse. When God is further departed from you, when Satan has built stronger holds in you, when conscience is grown more stupid, when custom in sin has doubled the strength and vehemence of your natural inclination to it. Alas ! how many millions have died and been taken away in their iniquities, that were as fully resolved upon repenting hereafter, as any that are now alive ? Take heed of this rock, upon which so many have split, and been cast away for ever. God's will is for the present ; he sayes, *To day if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. But if now when God is willing to give you life, you are unwilling ; he may be hereafter unwilling, when you would fain have it : *When death and destruction come upon you as a whirlwind*, he has threatned that you shall call upon him for life and salvation, but it shall be far from you ; you shall seek him early, but you shall not find him, if now you have knowledge, and do not chuse the fear of the Lord, Prov. 1. 28, 29.

3. *A will upon a mistake is only a seeming will.* Those whom our Lord likens to the stony ground, heard the word with joy, and were willing to embrace it, but they dreamt

dreamt not of the cross and persecution ; that made them to fall away. Many seem willing to be Converts, but *they sit not down and count the cost of conversion* : And when once they are informed, that they must deny themselves, let go all out of their affections presently, and out of their possession too, when standing in competition with the Lord Jesus ; when they are informed, that a bill of divorce must be given to their *Herodias*, that they must bid defiance to every lust, though it plead never so much delight or gain that it may still be embraced ; when they are informed, that they must watch, and pray, and walk with the greatest care, and fervency, and circumspection, that they must take the Kingdom of heaven with an holy violence, as it were by storm, else they will fall short and lose the crown. Oh then they cry out, *These are hard sayings ; who can bear them ?*

Use 3. Of Exhortation. Since men die because they will, Let me perswade you to *consent that your wills may be renewed*. Man has not a worse enemy than his own will, until there be a change wrought in it. And that this change may be effected, observe these directions.

I. Judge

1. Judge your selves because of your natural perverseness; till sensible of this you cannot be in a right manner humbled. That thou hast sinned so much, so long, should very much affect and afflict thee before God; but that thou hast a will to sin ten thousand times more, were it not for the restraints of grace; nay, to sin unto eternity! Oh, what confusion and sorrow should this cause!

2. Study the deceitfulness of the Tempter and the World; then your hearts will not be so forward to be taken with their baits, and to be drawn away from God. The world is vain and vexing, and Satan is a lyar and a murderer, you have little reason to yield to either.

3. Set before your eyes the blessedness of life eternal, and the misery of everlasting death, that life may be chosen, and the way to it.

4. Be fervent in prayer, that the Lord according to his promise would give you a new heart, and work in you to will of his own good pleasure, Ezek. 36. 26. Phil. 2. 13. And if he cause your hearts to desire grace and glory, he will satisfy those desires he has raised in you; if he work in you to will and to do, notwithstanding all opposition,
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you shall work out your own salvation, and an abundant entrance shall be administred to you, into the everlasting kingdom. Thus of the second Doctrine. *The reason why men die, and die for ever, is because they will.*

Doct. 3. The third Doctrine follows. *The Lord does call and call again upon sinners to turn from their evil wayes and live. Turn ye, Turn ye, saith God in the Text. The business of Conversion is not a thing which man first thought of; nay, he would never think of it, or be perswaded to it, if the Lord did not call after him, and make that call effectual. We read indeed in Scripture of sensible and awakened penitents, crying and begging to be turned; but these cries are but as it were the Echo's of God's voice and call that went before. In the handling of the Doctrine, I shall, First, shew how God calls upon sinners to turn to him. Secondly, Why he does it. Thirdly, Explain the nature of this Conversion or turning. Fourthly, conclude with Application.*

In the first place, I am to shew, *How God calls upon sinners to turn to him.* This he does several wayes.

1. *He calls upon them from Mount Ebal.* That was the Mount from whence the curses

curses were denounced; he tells them in his Word of the cursedness and wo of the unconverted's state. He sends the *Law as School-Master* to teach them a sad Lesson; that because of their frequent transgressions, they are just upon the brink of eternal misery; and his design is, that hereby they may be awakened and stopt in their destructive way, and *not flatter themselves with hopes of peace*, though they still walk on after the *imagination of their evil heart*.

This voice of the Lord by the Law is loud and terrible, uttered on purpose to rouse & startle them that are dead asleep. When the Law was delivered, *There was a burning with fire, there was blackness, and darkness, and tempest, the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard, intreated that the word might not be spoken to them any more; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake*, Heb. 12. 18, 19, 21. And if the manner of the Law's delivery was so dreadful, much more dreadful will be the manner of the Law's execution upon those by whom it has been violated? The *fire and darkness at Mount Sinai* were nothing in comparison with the *fire of Hell*, and the *blackness*

blackness of darkness there. Upon the impenitently wicked the Lord has threatened to rain snares, fire and brimston, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup, Psal. 11. 6. And truly this lecture of the Law is necessary, that we may attain to a true knowledge and understanding of sin; and when we have been thus at the foot of Mount Ebal and Sinai, and have heard that sin is the great hindrance of all sorts of blessings, and loads us with curses of all sorts, both temporal and spiritual, and also everlasting; this is the way to cure our unreasonable doating upon it, and to make us fear and tremble because we have given so much way to it.

2. *God calls upon sinners from Mount Gerizzim, to turn to him; from hence of old the blessings were sounded forth. He not only gives them a sight of wrath, as nigh at hand, while they continue workers of iniquity; but also he gives them a view of mercy afar off, which shall be brought neer them on condition their wickedness is forsaken. Upon the unrighteous man's forsaking of his sinful ways and thoughts, mercy and abundant pardon are promised, Isa. 55. 7. This call of the Gospel from Mount*

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Mount Gerizzim, is like the still voice after the strong wind, the fire and the earthquake. How full of encouragement are those words, Zech. 1. 3. *Turn unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts.* And Hos. 14. 1. *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thy iniquity. Thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help found. I will heal thy back-slidings, and will love thee freely, though thou deservest nothing but my anger and my hatred.*

Satan, by tempting us to sin, has taken away our blessing from us, yet we ought not to despond; for the Lord has *more than one blessing*. That which the first Adam forfeited, the second Adam was sent to restore, Act. 3. 26. *God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* The Lord does take sinners up, as it were, into mount Gerizzim; he shews them his Kingdom, and the glories of it; he tells them of his store of blessings, of the inestimable benefits which his Son has purchased, justification, adoption, sanctification, glory; and assures them, *All shall be theirs*, if they will but turn indeed. And truly these are other kind of offers, than

than Satan ever did, or can possibly make.

3. God calls upon sinners to turn, by the most passionate pleadings and pressing expostulations. His design in expostulating, is to make them sensible of their unreasonableness in persuing deceitful vanities, and fulfilling their defiling lusts, and refusing to convert unto him, who both can sanctifie them from their defilements, and satisfy them with his all-sufficiency. He expostulates the matter with Judah, Isa. 55. 2, 3. *Why will you spend your money, for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which cannot satisfy? since upon your coming to me, the life of your souls, and the sure mercies of an everlasting covenant may be obtained.*

The Lord pleads with the ungodly by the Ministry of the Word, after this manner. *What! Though you are told of sins deceitful, defiling and damnable nature; will you still embrace and hold it fast, to my dishonour and your own destruction? Though you are forewarned of the heat and heaviness of my anger, will you not flee from it? though you are informed so often how little Hell will be for your ease, will you needs run thither, and burn there for ever? though you are told of a Kingdom that cannot be moved, will not you*
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be moved with desire after it, will you not be persuaded to strive for it? Are grace and glory of no worth at all? Is not a Saviour to be prized by them, who by sin have enslaved and lost themselves, and are in danger of being lost unto eternity? Consider these things, and shew your selves men, O ye transgressors. Thus the Lord pleads, that he may prevail with sinners, for their own good.

4. God calls upon sinners to turn, by the examples of others, and by the voice of the rod upon themselves. The ungodly are very prone to observe bad examples, that they may imitate them; but 'tis their duty to take notice when exemplary punishments are inflicted upon them, that they may be afraid to follow them in wickedness any longer. When we behold others plagued for the sins which we are guilty of, the Lord bids us to see the heinousness of our own iniquities, in the strokes which others have felt before our eyes. And we may justly expect, that like sins will have like ends, if there be a continuance in provocation. Examples are purposely set before us, that we may not lust after evil things, 1 Cor. 10. 6. that we may be admonished to turn out of those paths,

paths, which have led others to ruin.

But especially when the rod does fall upon our own backs, God calls upon us in a more perceivable and sensible way to turn to him: The design of the rod is to *imbitter* sin, both to the *flesh* and to the *conscience*; and that it may not any longer be imagined delightful, which is the procuring cause of every stripe that is endured. The rod has a voice as well as the Word, which 'tis our wisdom to bear: When affliction is laid upon the sinners loyns, by it the Lord speaks such kind of language, *Jer. 2. 17.* *Hast thou not procured this unto thy self by sin? to turn from thine iniquity is to consult thine own ease; let the pain of the rod (which yet is nothing to the pains of Hell) convince thee, that sin is not to be admired for its pleasure; at present thou art only chastized with whips, but if thou art incorrigible, and sinnest yet more and more, assuredly at last thou shalt be lashed with scorpions.*

5. God calls upon sinners to turn to him, by the internal voice and motions of his Spirit. The Spirit often suggests concerning the sinful and false way. This is not the way, and therefore turn out of it; but concerning the way of holiness, which

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leads

leads to God. *This is the way*, therefore turn into it, and without declining walk in it, Isa. 30. 21. All the other Calls will be to little purpose, unless the Spirit do accompany them. Without his conviction, the denunciation of curses will not awaken. Without his illumination, the blessing profered will be undervalued. Without his setting an edge upon them, the most patheticall exhortations will not have the least efficacy to perswade; the loudest word will be no more regarded, than if it were a whisper. Unless the Spirit joy in his teaching and instruction, the rod will be mute and insignificant; nothing will be learned either by personal afflictions or by National judgments: 'Tis dangerous therefore to be heedless of, and resist the holy Ghost, since the efficacy of all depends upon him.

There is a twofold Call of the Spirit *more commune, and more special.*

I. *More commune*; and so, many are called, which never are throughly converted. 'Twas the *commune work* of the Spirit which made *Felix* tremble; which brought *Agrippa* within a step of Christianity, and caused *Herod* to do many things. Multitudes of unregenerate ones have felt

the waters stirr'd, the holy Ghost moving them to conversion, and readily profering his aid and assistance; and perhaps for a while they have been led by him: But then some lust or vanity they refused to let go, which he has bid them to abandon; they would not turn their spiritual sloth into serious diligence about the concerns of their immortal souls; and so by disregarding of his motions, slighting of his help, they have made the Spirit to go away in grief, that came in love to work upon them.

2. There is a Call of the Spirit, which is *more special and efficacious*; and when he thus moves them to turn to God, sinners are not only *almost*, but perswaded *altogether*. Now the *Method* of the Spirit in working on those who are indeed made Converts, is much to be observed.

1. Those whom the Spirit calls effectually, *he convinces of sin*, Joh. 16.8. He sets the *Law* before them, and he himself is the Laws Interpreter; and by his Commentary on it they are made to see, that the Law forbids not only the breakings forth of sin at the *lips*, and in the *life*, but also the inward lussings and risings of sin in the *heart*. And when the Law thus

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comes, Oh! how does *the offence abound!* The Spirit sets *their iniquities in order before their eyes*, and holds their eyes *waking to behold them*. The Book of Conscience is opened, and how many transgressions are presently beheld there registred? And if upon dipping into this book, so many abominations do appear, what an innumerable multitude are down in the book of Gods remembrance? Though sinners may not consider it, yet God remembers *all their wickedness*, Hos. 7. 2. This the soul layes to heart; *Innumerable evils compass him about*, (as David speaks) *his iniquities take hold upon him*, Psal. 40. 12. when he lyes down, they lye down; when he rises, they rise with him; wherever he goes or is, they continually dog and haunt him.

If the sinner have been notorious, how hideous and horrid will sin appear to him, when all pleas and excuses are silenced, when the painted visage is pull'd off, and it is seen by him in its native complexion? drunkenness, uncleanness, oaths, profane jesting, greediness after the world, will no longer then be made light of. These and such like, before seemed to have nothing of danger, much of delight and pleasure; but after conviction, their deceit-

ceitful and damnable nature will be as evident as the Sun at noon-day.

And though the sinner has been free from the *more gross pollutions of the world*; yet enough shall be shewed him to cause him to conclude himself a *Wretch*, and in a *lost estate*. What! are all his omissions, or mocking of the jealous God, by heartless performances, nothing? Is his mispence of time and regardlessness of *eternity*, nothing? Is his delighting in creatures and vanity, and the things of the world, and loving these more than God, and Christ, and glory, but a small matter? *These* are heinous sins, which yet the *more civilized* are to be charged with.

This conviction of the Spirit is *strong and lasting*, wears not off till the sinner is brought quite home. Actual transgressions with their aggravations lye heavy; and original sin, which is the fountain whence the other flow, is discover'd. And in this fountain there is *enough* to feed ten thousand times more streams than have issued forth. *David* is not only convinced of the murder and adultery he had committed, but is made to trace these sins to the Well-head, the original corruption of his nature, *Psal. 51. 5.* and the sight of this,

how much did it tend to his humiliation?

Finally, this conviction is not only of some *acts* of sin, but of the badness of the sinners *state*; he is made to see himself because a *child of disobedience*, therefore also a *child of wrath*. And without cavilling, all is yielded to and acknowledged; with *such evidence* is this conviction of the Spirit.

2. Those whom the Spirit calls effectually, *he works fear in them*. The *spirit of bondage to fear* goes before the *spirit of adoption*. Of these fears and terrors there are degrees indeed, yet *such a measure* is wrought in all towards whom the Lord has designs of love; as to make them *restless in a natural estate*. Carnal security is one of the first things that is struck at by the Spirit; he bids the soul awake, and lets him know that while he sleeps in sin; 'tis much more hazardous, than if he slept upon the top of a *Mast*.

Well may the sinner be afraid; *wrath* armed with *irresistible and almighty power*, he has engaged against himself. *And who can stand before Gods indignation? who can abide the fierceness of his anger?* Nah. i. The curses of the Law have a dreadful sound in the sinners ears; and because threat-

threatned, damnation will not slumber long; the propinquity and nearness of such great evils raises fear exceedingly. His assent is strong; and in his mind he now foresees the Lord Jesus revealed with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, ready to take vengeance on them that know not God and disobey the Gospel, and to punish them with everlasting destruction, 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. And on thinks he with himself, how terrible will it be, to be of the number of them who shall call to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, that they may be hid from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! This causes him to make an halt in his wicked course; he dares not still rush into sin, as the horse rushes into the battel.

3. Those whom the Spirit calls effectually, he raises grief and sorrow in them, because of their sin and misery. They see what they have done against God, against themselves; and this makes their spirits troubled. This is that being weary and heavy laden (which the Scripture speaks of) that is in those whom Christ calls to come to him, that they may find rest unto their souls, Mat. 11. 28, 29. There was a voice heard upon the high places, weeping and supplication

of the children of Israel; because they had perverted their way, and had forgotten the Lord their God; and this went before their closing with his invitation to return, Jer. 3. 21, 22.

The sinner by the Spirit is made to behold the sadness of his case, the evil of his sin, how miserably he has been deceived by his lusts and Satan; and so his own folly in yielding to them. How does he now accuse and condemn himself? *His heart is grieved, he is pricked in his reins, because he has been so foolish and ignorant, so like a beast before God, Psal. 73. He wilhes a thousand times, that temptations had been resisted, and that sin had never been committed. I shall represent the workings of the sinners heart in this Prosopopæia. O wretched as I am, What have I been doing all my dayes! Was this the end I was made for, to undo myself? Was there no better employment to be found, than to ad sin to sin, and so to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? How much time have I mispent, and what pains have I taken to make my self miserable! Ah foolish self-destroying wretch! Dost thou not see how far thou art gone in the broad way; how long sin has made a meer slave of thee; and how bitterly thou hast provoked the* Lord

Lord to anger ? Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night ! The damned will weep and wail for ever, and shall not I mourn and weep that have so highly deserved to be damned ? Well may I be troubled, and bowed down greatly, and go mourning all the day long. Thus the sinner grieves and bemoans himself ; and carnal company, sensual pleasures, worldly diversions cannot drive away this sorrow ; none but he who broke the heart, is able to bind up the wounds of it.

4. Those whom the Spirit calls effectually, *he causes to despair in themselves.* They are made to perceive, that they have no power to raise themselves out of those depths of sin and misery which they have plunged themselves into ; and as they are *unable* to help themselves, so they see that they are *utterly unworthy* to be helped. God may justly suffer them to *lie* where they are *fallen* ; and should he deal thus, they would fall lower and lower till fallen past recovery. The sinner may have recourse to his duties, hoping by these to make *amends* to God, for what he has *done amiss* ; but he is made to see, that his best duties have so much

• sin

sin mingled with them; that were it not for *Christs righteousness* and *intercession*, they would be a meer abomination. Now he is beaten off from his own bottom, he has *no confidence in the flesh* (as the Apostle speaks) *Phil. 3. 3.* He can do nothing of himself; he can claim nothing as his *due* to be done for him, but he must be beholding to *grace* for all.

Upon this he *cries out of the depths unto the Lord*, *Psal. 130. 1.* he perceives himself sinking, and cries, *Lord save me, or I perish. I am at the brink of the bottomless pit, and in I shall fall, unless the hand of mercy catch hold of me.* He begs with *Ephraim*, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.* And as the *evil of sin* is presented to his view, so the *goodness of God* is in some measure by the *Spirit* discovered; and therefore he desires to be converted, not only upon *necessity*, because else he would be extremely and eternally miserable; but also upon *choice*, because this is the way unto the truest happiness. And these *desires to be turned*, are as it were the *first breathings* of the new creature. Thus have I shewed the manner of the *spirits* operation in those whom he calls effectually to turn to *God*; as also the several other wayes how
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the Lord calls upon sinners to conversion; most whereof prove ineffectual, because those that are called are deaf, disobedient, and gainsaying.

My work in the *second place*, will be to lay down the reasons, *Why God does thus call the children of men to turn from their evil ways and live.*

The reasons are such as these.

1. *Hereby he shews his gracious nature, that he delights not in the death and destruction of his creatures.* Indeed death will be inflicted on them upon their obstinate continuance in evil; but the shewing mercy and giving life, is the thing that pleases God; therefore he calls the most obdurate to conversion.

2. The Lord calls us to turn, *that hereby he may inform us of our duty.* We may understand from hence that 'tis our duty to go astray no longer, but to come to our Fathers house with speed; and by the pressing frequency of the calls, our obligation to this duty is vastly heightened. And truly the disregarding of our duty in this particular, and the great engagements to it; our *refusing to Turn*, will do us more harm, than all our other sins. All our other sins, upon our conversion, would be

be abundantly pardoned; but as long as we continue unconverted, not one is forgiven, the guilt of *all* does lye upon us, and we assuredly do lye under wrath.

3. The Lord calls upon us to Turn, to shew that our turning to him will not be in vain. Though sin has very much abounded, yet there is not only a possibility, but a certainty upon our returning, of our being graciously received and embraced. And this is matter of great encouragement unto a soul who lies under the apprehensions of sin and wrath. Hark what language is spoken unto Judah! Jer. 3. 1, 5. *Behold thou hast spoken and done evil things, as thou couldst, thou hast play'd the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.* This call evidently shews that their transgressions though multiplied exceeding (if now they would but turn unfeignedly) should not be a bar to shut against them the door of mercy.

4. The Lord calls upon us to turn, to intimate 'tis from himself, we must have power and strength to turn in truth. The precepts and exhortations in Scripture, to convert, to repent, to believe, to stand fast, and such like, are not delivered, that from hence we might conclude we have power
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in our selves, to do what we are commanded and exhorted to ; but they are delivered, that we might turn these precepts into prayers : For instance , when we hear the command, *to believe* , it should make us cry out with the sick childes Father in the Gospel. *Lord, help my unbelief.* When we hear the command, *to cast away every transgression* ; it should make us beg with David, *Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have the dominion over me.* When we hear the command, *to turn* ; it should make us to use the language of that penitent, *Jer. 31. 18. Turn thou me and I shall be turned ; for thou art the Lord my God.*

5. The Lord calls upon us to turn, to leave the obstinate without excuse, who will not turn, who will not come to Christ that they may have life. Of Israel he saith, *All the day long have I stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people,* Rom. 10. ult. but this their disobedience rendred them without apology. When the unconverted fall into God's revenging hands, they are the less to be pitied, they can have nothing to plead ; because Gods stretching forth his hands, by way of invitation, in the Gospel was in vain. These sinners against

gainst their own souls; whose neck is like an iron sinew, who will neither be terrified by menaces, nor mollified by the expressions of the greatest kindness and mercy; when they are summon'd to the bar, how will they be struck *speechless*, having not one word to say, against their own condemnation! They were called unto grace and glory, but they would not hearken. They were told of their danger, but they would not seek to prevent it; they were informed of the *ways of sin*; and were dehorted from it; nay wooed and intreated with the most passionate earnestness, not to be cruel to themselves, by giving way to such a cursed thing; yet they would not consent to be freed from *sin*, and become the servants of righteousness. And surely their *mouths must needs be stopped*; or if they say any thing, when sentence is passed upon them, it must be, to side with the justice of God against themselves, to acknowledge the equality of *his ways*, the inequality of *their own*.

6. The Lord calls upon us to turn, that those who are ordained to eternal life may be effectually wrought upon, and prevailed with to turn indeed. We read that the Gospel was preached both to the Jews and to the

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Gentiles, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, *Act. 15. 48.* And the truth is, 'tis much for the sake of the *Elect*, who are scattered up and down among the multitude, that the call to turn is so general as it is. Hereby those whom the Father has given to *Christ* are brought home; and coming home how welcome are they? *Joh. 6. 37.* All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. So much for the reasons why God calls upon sinners to turn.

In the *Third place*, I promised to explain the nature of this conversion or turning. And I find the Apostle does give a notable and full description of it, *Act. 26. 18.* where he calls it, *A turning from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* Hence we gather that conversion lyes in four things.

1. In being turned from darkness.
2. In being turned unto light.
3. In being turned from the power of Satan.

4. In being turned unto God.

1. Conversion implies a being turned from darkness. As darkness was upon the face of the deep, till God said, Let there be light,
Gen.

Gen. 1. 2. So truly, darkness overspreads the soul of a natural man, till he is enlightened from above. Believers are delivered from the power of darkness when translated into the Sons Kingdom, *Col. 1. 13.* which shews that sometimes they were in darkness as well as others; and this darkness is said to have a power, a power to hold, a power to blind, a power to ruin; so that there is a necessity of being delivered from it. Now there be several kinds of darkness, from which they are made free.

1. Converts are turned from the darkness of ignorance. No longer are they contented to be ignorant of the way to salvation, but are made inquisitive what they must do to be saved. They are informed about the doctrine of Christ, and are made to understand what believing and repenting mean. They know that sin is to be sorrowed for, as the worst of evils, and that God is the chiefest good; and that he so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life, *Joh. 3. 16.* They are made to know that Christ is to be received by faith, and that there is no salvation in any other, and that 'tis in vain to

to expect any thing from him as a *Saviour*, unless there be a consenting, to *obey* him as a *Lord*. These and such like truths are no longer hid from them. They are sensible now of the mischief and danger of ignorance; 'tis therefore their desire to have it in a greater measure removed; and they follow on to know the Lord.

2. Converts are turned from *the darkness of unbelief*. The Spirit does work a persuasion in their hearts, of the certain truth of whatever God has revealed in his word. They dare not any longer make the Lord a lyar, by not crediting what he has recorded. They believe, and admire, and acknowledge the *Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*, Col.

2. 2. Heretofore their unbelief did hide the Gospel from them; and concluded them in a lost estate; they saw not the *Majesty* of the Word, they were not taken with the *treasures of wisdom and grace*, which are there revealed; neither were they awakened by the *terrors*, with which the Word abounds against ungodly ones. But now the vail is taken away, and they assent to, and are affected with what the Gospel speaks to them. They believe that God is in Christ reconciling the world un-

to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. And that being justified by his blood, they shall be saved from wrath through him, Rom.

5.9. They believe that sin is deadly, and the world a cheat, and that solid and eternal happiness is to be found in God; therefore they leave a shadow to embrace that which is substantial.

3. Converts are turned from the darkness of prejudice. Prejudice raises a strange kind of mist before the eyes, which hinders the light of truth from shining into the mind. The Jews prejudice against Christ, was one great thing that blinded them; a principal impediment to their embracing of the Faith. Satan endeavours to fill the ungodly with these prejudices, and to keep them up; because by these his Kingdom is very much upheld. Sometimes sinners are prejudiced against holiness, as if it were a disgrace; whereas it being the glory of the Divine Nature, certainly 'tis the greatest honour and perfection which the rational creature is capable of. Sometimes holiness is looked upon as needless; and yet the Scripture affirms, that none shall see the Lord without it. Sometimes the carnal heart rises against holiness, because it imagines, that nothing of

of delight and pleasure is consistent with it; whereas indeed by being converted unto God our joy is not *lost*, but only *changed*. The Kingdom of God is not only *righteousness*, but also *peace and joy in the holy Ghost*, Rom. 14. 17. whereas the joy before was poor, and low, and brutish, and defiling, being mixed with many secret grudgings of conscience, and misgivings of heart: Now upon conversion, the joy is pure, angelical, satisfactory, and an earnest of those pleasures which will be for evermore, Psal. 16. ult.

Neither is this unreasonable prejudice only against the wayes of holiness, but also against the *publishers* of these wayes. There was a prejudice against *Elijah*, as if he had been a *troubler of Israel*; against *Jeremiah*, as if he had been *unfaithful to the State*, and a secret friend to the *Chaldeans*; against the *Apostles*, as if they had been intolerable disturbers, that *had turned the world upside-down*. And truly the treasure oft-times is disregarded, though of such inestimable value, because of the vessel in which 'tis brought.

But when any are turned, the mist of prejudice is immediately scattered. Then strict doctrine will go down, which before

was nauseated, and made the heart to rise against it; *then* a servant of Christ will be esteemed and obeyed, that before was lookt upon as *the filth and off-scouring of the world*, 1 Cor. 4. 13.

4. Converts are turned from *the works of darkness*. These works are *cast off*, Rom. 13. 12. No known presumptuous sin is allowed of; they perceive the *fruitlessness* of their former wayes, and therefore now are *ashamed of them*, Rom. 6. 21. Formerly they went on securely in sin, because they knew not *whither they were going*; but now they perceive the *tendency* of these works of darkness, even unto *blackness of darkness for ever*; and so they are *made free from sin*; that is, from sins servitude, and become *the servants of righteousness*. Sin may plead hard against its being cast away; but its pleas are all invalid.

The gainful sin does thus plead for it self: *I have raised thee from a mean to an high degree, I have filled thy bag, and furnished thy Table. By me thou hast gotten a fair estate, who else wouldst have been little differing from a beggar. And what shall I now be cast off having been so beneficial, and yielded so much advantage?* But the Convert has enough to reply to such a plea.

What-

Whatever he has gained unjustly he must restore ; and if he had trusted in God, and done good, he would have fared better ; the Mammon of unrighteousness is attended with a curse. And all the while he thrived in a wicked way, he was destitute of the true riches ; and 'tis a wonder, by such dishonest gaining of the world, he lost not his soul long ago. Now therefore he is resolved against sinful gain, lest e're he is aware ; God, and Christ, and his soul be lost beyond recovery.

The pleasing sin also is not without arguments, for its being cherished ; I have pleased thy flesh, and rejoiced thy heart ; I have made dayes and nights to pass unsensibly away, I have gratified thy senses, and made thy tongue to sing for joy ; I have stupified and laid that Fury called conscience, when it has begun to stir and torture thee ; I have chased away thy cares, and made thee to forget thy sorrows. Time was when the very thoughts of me were delightful, and I was embraced as a darling ; and why should I now be banished and killed, as if I were an enemy ? Is affliction of soul, and brokenness of heart, to be preferred before the sweetness I was wont to afford thee ?

But the Converts ear is deaf unto such

Syren-melody; one word is enough to dash and answer all, *That the pleasures of sin are but for a season*, Heb. 11. 25. but the pains of Hell (which without conversion are *sure* to follow) will never have a period, nor be in the least mitigated. The rich man who had lived jocosely, fared deliciously every day, when he was cast into the flames, begged but for a drop of water, and 'twas denied him. Therefore the works of darkness are cast off by the Convert, the pleasure of these works is nothing comparable to the pain, nor the gain to the loss, which will speedily follow.

2. As this conversion implies a being turned from darkness, so also a being turned unto light, Eph. 5. 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light.* And so 2 Cor. 4. 6. *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* This light has a threefold property, to discover, to direct, to operate.

1. *This light discovers:* The Apostle tells us, *whatever does make manifest is light.* The Convert sees what he never saw before. There may be many toads, and serpents,

pents, and other loathsome and hateful creatures in a dungeon, but till the light shine in, these are not perceived; the breaking in of light discovers them: And so in the heart of man many impure and noysome lusts have their abode; but they are not *indeed* acknowledged, neither are they any annoyance, till the *light* does make them manifest. The Convert sees his sin, his shame; he is sensible of the plagues of his own heart, and the absolute necessity of a cure. His *interest* likewise is discovered to him; and that is in *seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness*, in securing his soul, which is of far greater value than the world, in minding the *one thing needful*, that good part which can never be taken away.

3. *This light directs.* It guides those who are turned into the way of peace and truth. The Lamp of the Word (the Spirit joyning with, and teaching by it) shews which are the *perverse and crooked paths*, to the end, that these may be shunned and avoided; and it also directs into those wayes which are *pleasing* unto God, and *pleasant* in themselves; and moreover, so *exceeding safe*, that none ever missed of heaven, that continued to tread in them.

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We are directed to believe and to obey; and where faith and obedience are linked together, the off-spring of that conjunction will most certainly be glory, honour, and immortality.

3. *This light operates in a powerful manner.* 'Tis such a light as has heat along with it. Converts were before told of the evil, the folly of sin; but now they see this by another light, and their hearts are warmed with indignation against it. They see sin, so as to be deeply affected; they sorrow for it, and abhor it. They were before informed of the mercy and al sufficiency, and other perfections of God; but now they have such a view of his glory in the face of Christ, as that the fire of love is enkindled, and that love does put them upon labour. When Caleb had seen the good Land of Promise, he was very eager to go up at once and possess it, Num. 13. 30. And truly, when this light has made a discovery of the celestial Canaan, and directed Converts how to get thither: Oh! what watching, what praying, what resisting, what striving, what storming will there be?

3. This Conversion implies a being turned from the power of Satan. He is the Spirit that works and rules in the children of

of disobedience, *Eph. 2. 2.* and has possession of them till converted; but *then* he is cast out, and his strong holds are thrown down. And oh! considering the Devils hatred, his power, his subtilty; what mercy is it to have the cords, whereby he led us captive at his pleasure, broken? Three things are comprehended in being turned from the power of Satan.

1. Those who are converted are *freed from Satans dominion.* His usurped authority they have wisdom and grace to resist. The promise made to them who are not under the Law, but under grace, is this, *That sin shall not have the dominion over them, Rom. 6. 14.* And this necessarily implies, that Satans dominion shall be destroyed, for 'tis by the power of sin he holds it. *The net is now broke, and the soul escapes as a bird out of the snare of the Fowler.* The unconverted sinner, what a slave to Satan is he? If the Devil say to him *go*, he goes; nay, he *runs*, though it be to his own ruin. The Devil can but *ask and have.* The sinners time and members, nay and his soul too, he can have upon demand; but the Convert draws nigh to God, and is so strengthened by the grace of God, that instead of being commanded
by

by Satan, he compels Satan to flee from him.

2. Those who are converted, *lay aside the work of Satan*. They are aware how base and injurious, both to God and their own souls the devils employments are, and there is a better work than *His*; namely the work of the Lord, which they labour in, and in the doing of which they cannot too much abound.

3. Those who are converted, *Satan's baits become despicable to them*. 'Tis by means of these the devil is so powerful. The God of this world does make great use of this world, to bewitch and ensnare the children of men. Sensual delights he exceedingly magnifies, sumptuous fare, costly apparel, credit among men, pleasant recreations, he suggests, *How happy will these make you*. He tells sinners of the worth of silver and gold, and often through the burning-glasses of their eyes, endeavours to set their hearts on fire by beauty. But the Convert, by the eye of faith, looks higher than these things. He is made to see the vanity of the creature. He has had impressions of divine displeasure, and then the world has appeared an empty bubble, and insignificant cypher.

His

His conscience was wounded, and when wounded, alas ! it was *Nullis medicabilis herbis* ; not to be cured by any or all the things the world could give him.

The Convert has been made to look upward, and there perceives more durable riches , more lasting pleasures than the world can brag of ; and so not the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen, he is taken with. Though he is in the world, yet he looks beyond it. *Moses* having respect to the recompence of reward, refused to be called the son of *Pharoahs* daughter, and slighted the pleasures of sin, and all the treasures which were in *Egypt*.

4. This Conversion as it implies a being turned from the power of Satan, so a being turned unto God. Turn to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of Hosts, *Zech. 1. 3.* As it is in Kings Courts ; many that come thither, busie themselves in beholding the curious hangings and the pictures which are there ; but the wise Statesman minds not these ; his business is with the King himself. In like manner, while most of the Creation are taken up wholly with the beholding, and admiring, and pursuing this, and that, and t'other vanity ; the
Con-

Convert (who shews himself herein to be truly wise) approaches and has recourse to God; who made these things, and can make him more happy, than these are able.

Now when the sinner turns to God, he looks upon him under a threefold notion, *As a Lord, as a Father, as his ultimate end.*

1. The Convert eyes God *as a Lord.* He owns his Sovereignty, and submits himself unto his Scepter. *Other Lords indeed in times past have had the dominion over him,* Isa. 26. 13. but now his resolution is fixed and peremptory to own no other Lord but God alone. His will stoops unto, and complies with the will of God; when his natural inclination towards any thing is most vehement, if the Convert be informed, *That God by that thing will be displeased;* that's enough to stop the current of his desires. The testimonies of the Lord he takes as a rule to order his conversation by. And when he hears that God has commanded him to keep his precepts diligently, his heart presently sends forth an eccho back again unto that command, *Oh that my wayes were directed, that I might keep thy Statutes!* Psal.

119. 4, 5. He dares not any longer presumptuously commit the evil which the Word forbids, nor omit the good which the Word commands. Failings and infirmities there are, and will be. *In many things* (says the Apostle) *we offend all*. But this evil, that is present with the Convert, is a burden to him; and the Law of God is approved and consented to, and delighted in, as holy, just and good. The Convert (which does distinguish him from an hypocrite) is far from wishing that the Law were less holy, and that it would allow a liberty to sin; but he wishes that his heart and life were more holy, and to this Law more and more conformable.

2. The Convert eyes God *as a Father*; or as *willing* to become his Father in Christ Jesus. 'Twas truly said by one of the Ancients, *Tam Pater nemo, tam pater nemo*; none such a Father as God, none so full of fatherly affection; he has sufficient store to supply all the needs of all returning Prodigals; and he is far more willing to impart of this store, to them which see their need, and ask, than earthly Parents can be to give bread unto their hungry children, *Mat. 7. 11*. This is great

great encouragement to returning. Those Parables of the lost sheep, the lost silver, and the lost son, were uttered to this end to hearten sinners to come home to God, *Luke 15*. The man rejoiced when he had found his sheep, the woman when she had recovered her piece of silver: That kind father, though necessity drave his childe home, being ready to perish in the far Country; and though he came in rags, having wasted all his substance in riotous living; I say, that kind father, as soon as ever he saw his son, ran to him, had compassion upon him, embraced him, kissed him, cloaths him, adorns him, makes a feast for him; and how glad was he that the lost child was found, that the dead son was alive again!

Surely, we may conclude, that God is willing to receive those that being sensible *they have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it has not profited them,* Job 33. 27. do with their whole heart return to him. 'Tis true, the Converts sins and unbelieving heart together, do fill him many times with doubts and fears. He remembers God and is troubled, because he has so bitterly provoked him; he is afraid to call him Father, and
very

very much doubts of being received; but then again faith and hope are encouraged by such kind of promises as that which you read of 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. *Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

3. The Convert eyes God as his ultimate end; that God may be glorified, that God may be enjoyed is his design in turning. The sinner is sensible, that while unconverted, he liv'd to the dishonour of him that gave him life, and in whose hand his breath is. Now therefore he has the more zealous desires to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in those works, which are to his praise. Before he sought himself, he sought his own things; he had no higher aim than to gratifie his worldly and fleshly inclinations, with what his carnal and corrupted mind judg'd to be suitable; and so himself were but profited and pleased, he cared not how much the Lord were injured and provoked. But now he is of another mind, he carries on the same design that Angels do, that Christ did; namely, to honour and please the God of glory.

glory. And not only in his spiritual actions, does he aim at this, but also in his civil and natural actions and recreations, which thereby become spiritualized; he seriously minds that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 10. 31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or what ever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* And now he lives like a creature, like a son; before he lived like neither, while he lived only to himself.

And by thus glorifying of God, the Convert takes the right course to enjoy him. He looks upon God as the best portion, and therefore pitches upon him. *Let the men of the world take the things of the world, if they please; let them pursue after bubbles, let them toy and vex themselves, for that which when gotten will prove only a further vexation. My soul seek thou only after God; he alone deserves thy seeking; he alone, when found, can satisfie thee to the uttermost.* That's now his language.

Nothing short of God will content the Convert; wealth cannot do it, credit, sensual delights cannot do it; nay, Ordinances themselves are but like empty breasts, and broken cisterns, unless communion with God be enjoyed in them. He prays for God, he hears for God, he
fasts

fasts for God, he comes to the table for God. Earth is like Hell, when God is absent; and Heaven he judges, would not be Heaven if God were not alwayes present. Thus have I shewed wherein conversion lies, in being turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

I shall add a word or two further to manifest *through whom* it is that sinners must turn to God, if they would be received. And the truth is, 'tis *through Christ alone*. The Apostle plainly affirms, *That through him both Jews and Gentiles have access by one Spirit unto the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. And our Lord in expresse terms sayes, *Joh. 14. 6. I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.* 'Tis impossible that such guilty and polluted creatures as we have made our selves by sin, should ever be accepted before a just and holy God, without a Mediator. Hence it follows, there is a necessity we should *look unto Jesus* (as the Apostles phrase is) *in whom God is reconciling the world unto himself*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. else we should not dare to approach, but flie away for fear of being (as we deserve to be) consumed.

Now when we look unto Jesus the Mediator, we must look upon him as our *Righteousness*, as our *Advocate*, as our *Helper*.

1. We must look upon Christ as our *Righteousness*. This is the Name whereby that branch that springs from *David* is called, *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. 23. 6. There is no coming unto God without some righteousness or other. *Our own righteousness is like filthy rags*; and because rags, 'tis not able to cover us; because filthy rags, it cannot adorn or commend us. Therefore we must look unto Jesus to be *made righteousness* to us, that for the sake of his obedience and sufferings in our stead, our sins may be forgiven, and our persons may be accepted in the sight of God. The righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to believers, is so every way perfect and sufficient, that the pure and piercing eye of God can espy not the least flaw or defect in it. If therefore we are covered with this, none of our sins will appear against us, or be laid to our charge. *Christ hath died*, and upon his death God doth justify. Who therefore shall accuse or condemn those that believe?

2. When

2. When we turn to God, we must look upon Christ *as our Advocate*, 1 Joh. 2. 1. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous.* This Advocate, as he suffered to purchase pardon and grace, so he intercedes that these may be bestowed upon returning sinners, and God his Father *bears him always*. We ought to consider, and to be encouraged by considering, what an High-Priest we have at the right hand of God. When the sinner beholds himself, in himself undone, and comes petitioning for remission of sin, for the healing of his spiritual plagues, and for the saving of his soul, which seems to be just upon the borders of damnation. This Advocate will take the sinners petition, and present it to his Father, and all shall be granted, ay, and infinitely more than the sinner can desire or conceive.

3. When we turn to God, we must look upon Christ *as our Helper*. He does strengthen the feeble knees, else we should not be able to set one step in the way to life. The Lord Jesus is called the *Author of our Faith*, Heb. 12. 2. and by him, *believers are said to have access into that grace wherin they stand*, Rom. 5. 2. The

Conversion of a Sinner.
sinner must be made sensible of his own insufficiency to turn himself, to set himself at liberty; and upon this, must look unto the Son of God, to bring his soul out of prison, to make him free indeed from the curse of the Law, from the bondage of corruption, and to enable to come to God, and cleave to him.

In the last place follows the Application.
Use I. Of Examination.

Since God calls upon sinners again and again to turn, *It highly concerns all to examine, whether this Call has been obeyed?* 'Tis wisdom to bring our grace to the Touch-stone, since there is so much counterfeit grace in the world. As 'tis easie and common to mistake in this matter; so there is no mistake more dangerous, and it won't be long, e're to correct mistakes about conversion will be impossible. The damned see wherein they did deceive themselves; but alas! 'tis now too late to think of turning better; the door of mercy is shut and barr'd, and will be barr'd for ever. I remember *Theodore* commenting upon this Text, observes, that the doubling of the words,
Turn

Turn ye, turn ye, $\Delta\eta\lambda\omicron\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\epsilon\theta\eta\varsigma$
 $\tau\omicron\ \gamma\nu\eta\sigma\kappa\omicron\nu$; gives us to understand the
sincerity which is required in conversion.
A bare appearance sets us at a farther di-
stance from God.

Here I shall speak of some changes
that have a kind of likeness to conver-
sion, which yet are to be found in them,
that fall short both of grace and glory.

1. Those cannot be said to be indeed
converted, *who are only turned to such or such*
a Party, or Opinion, about smaller matters
in Religion. Suppose thy Opinion be Or-
thodox and right, what's that, if thy heart
be not right in the sight of God? Those
who please themselves, because they have
the name of *Non-conformists*, what does
this signifie, unless they refuse to conform
to the sinful fashions and courses of the
world? On the other side, They that
boast of being *Sons of the Church*, what will
that advantage them, if by their swear-
ing, lying, and hatred of holiness, they
shew themselves the *Sons of Belial*?

2. Those are not indeed converted,
whose turning is only partial. Saul obeyed
the command of the Lord in part against
Amalek; that which was vile and refuse he
destroyed utterly, but delicate *Agag*, and

the best of the spoyl he spared, 1 Sam. 15. 9. but this partial obedience is censured as high rebellion, v. 23. Many will yield to Gods Call in some degree; the sins which they can better spare, they will consent to the mortification of; but the chief, the darling, the delicate sin, which they live upon, or live so sweetly with. Oh! *That shall not be touched.* Herod was a partial Convert; in sundry respects he yielded obedience to the Baptist's preaching, but when John would have turned him from his incest with *Herodias*, this could not be born, but instead of obeying this message, he persecutes, and after kills the messenger.

3. Those are not indeed converted, *who only turn to God in the time of their extremity, and after are guilty of revolting.* Israel, when Sinai was all in a fire before their eyes, turned unto God, for fear of being consumed. Then they cry out, they will hearken and do what ever the Lord should speak to them, Deut. 5. 27. But before a few dayes were expired, they quickly turned out of the way which God commanded them, and fell into gross idolatry. And again we read, *When God slew them: then they sought him, they returned & enquired*

The Conversion of
quired early after him; and yet all this while
their heart was not right, neither were they
steadfast in his Covenant, Psal. 78. 34, 37-
How many sick-bed resolutions have look-
ed like conversion, which upon the return
of health have vanished quite away? True
conversion is a lasting change; there may
indeed be falling fits, and fits of slumber:
The wise Virgins slumbered and slept, Mat.
25. though they were not over wise to do
so. But yet true Converts never go so far,
as to change their Lord, and to chuse any
thing but God for their chiefest happi-
ness.

Reader, beware of being only almost
a Convert, as thou wouldst be unwilling,
only to be almost saved, and quite
damn'd.

The question now will be, how may
true conversion be discerned from all those
shews, whereby multitudes are deluded?
Unto this I answer in these particulars.

1. In true Conversion *the heart is turned*
from the love of every known iniquity. The
strength of sin lies in the love of it, and
love to it plainly argues, that it holds the
heart still in possession. That's the Con-
verts language, *I esteem thy commands con-*
cerning all things to be right, and I hate every

false way, Psal. 119. 128. Thy love is that which God does principally require of thee; if sin, if the world run away with that, how canst thou have the face to say thou art turned? 'Tis not sufficient to abstain from the outward act of sin, an hypocritical Pharisee may go so far; but the very soul must abhor it: Especially the sin that has been most desired, most delighted in, will be most detested when conversion is sincere. The covetous man when turned, will most abhor covetousness; the unclean, their filthiness; the proud, their pride; and the reason is evident, because by these sins God has been most displeased and dishonoured, and they most of all polluted and defiled.

2. In true Conversion, *there is a renewing of the whole man.* All things are become new (sayes the Apostle) 2 Cor. 5. in them that are new creatures; and old things are passed away. The whole man is sanctified, though not wholly sanctified; every part is changed, though the change be not perfect. The understanding is inlightned, the conscience is made tender, and has a great command; the heart makes choice of God, the desires are after his favour and fellowship, the members are yielded as

instruments of righteousness unto holiness. The Convert willingly resigns and gives up his whole self, both body and spirit to the Lord.

3. In true Conversion *there is a desire to be turned more and more*; there is an hungering after a greater degree of righteousness. The remainders of flesh are a burden, and the spirit does lust against them, Gal. 5. 17. The Convert goes to God, to perfect that which concerns him, to strengthen what he has wrought for him. Lord! Thou hast done much for me, but there is much more still to do; here many enemies still to slay, many distempers still to heal, many spots still to wash out, many wrinkles still to smooth. Oh! Thou who hast laid the foundation, rear up the building, and at last bring forth the Top-stone, that I may cry, Grace, grace, for ever!

4. In true conversion, there is a pure and fervent love to Converts. Love to the Brethren is a sign of being passed from death to life, 1 Joh. 3. 14. Let them be mean, poor, of weak parts, let them be vilified and despised by the world; yet if Saints, they will be esteemed and owned by them that are sincerely changed. Then our love is right, when the more holy any are,
the

more we love them ; and the more holy designs they have upon us, the more plainly they deal with us, for sin which they see in us, still we do the more ardently affect them. Yea, and we can rejoyce in their grace, though because of their lustre we do shine more obscurely.

5. In true Conversion, *there is a pity towards the unconverted.* Those who are turned have escaped danger, and they cannot but be moved with others peril. How can they chuse but mourn over their relations and acquaintance, that are without Christ and God in the world? Oh, what hazard do such run? when they go to sleep, they know not but they may wake in the midst of flames that are unquenchable! when they go out of their houses they may be in hell before they return! They hang over the bottomless pit, by the small thread of their lives; and a thousand things may happen every day sufficient to break that thread asunder, and then in they fall without redemption. Oh doleful state of the ungodly! If thou who art a religious Wife, shouldst wake in the night, and find thy Husband stone dead by thee, would it not extreamly amaze and grieve thee? Or if thou who art the Master of a
fa-

The Conversion of the Soul
family shouldst find all thy children and servants of a sudden dead before thy eyes; would not thy heart be extreemly affected? And surely if thy Husband, thy Wife, thy Children, thy Servants, are dead in sins, in danger of being for ever damned, much more reason hast thou to be concerned for them, and to endeavour by advise, and prayers, and tears, to have them turned and reconciled unto God.

Now Reader, Try thy self by these signs of Conversion; if thou findest them in thy self, thou mayest rejoyce, for these plainly shew, that thy name is written in the Book of Life. But, if any sin be loved, if thy mind, and conscience, and heart, and life be all defiled; and as thou art unrenewed, so thou hast no desire after renewing grace; if thou delightest in the carnal, and art an hater of Saints. This shews, to conversion thou art a stranger, and to this hour art in the gall of bitterness.

Use II. Of Terror.

Whoever thou art, high or low, rich or poor, male or female, that readest these lines, and wast never turned. I am sent
to

to thee from God with heavy tydings ;
 such, as if thou wert not a bruit, a stock,
 would make thee like *Belshazzar*, when
 upon the view of the hand-writing upon
 the wall, *his countenance was changed, his*
thoughts troubled him, the joynts of his loyns
were loosed, and his knees smote one against
another, Dan. 5. 6. I am to prophecy not
 good concerning thee, but evil. I have
 a roll to deliver thee, but 'tis written with-
 in and without with lamentation, and mourn-
 ing and wo. Thou art perhaps jolly and se-
 cure, but this is like the mirth and laugh-
 ter of a sick man out of his senses, which
 argues his distemper to be the sorer. Alas !
 sinner, Thou hast not reason so much as
 once to smile while in a state of nature.
 How many threatnings are denounced a-
 gainst thee ? And suppose thou wert sur-
 rounded with Cannons, all ready at once
 to be discharged at thee, these would be
 nothing neer so dreadful as the threat-
 nings and curses which the just and jea-
 lous God has uttered. Open thy eyes and
 look which way thou wilt, enough may be
 perceived to cause thy heart to meditate
 terror ; above, an angry God ; below, a
 flaming Hell ; behind, an innumerable
 host of sins pursuing thee ; before, Sa-
 tan

tan and the world leading thee along in the broad way to destruction.

But more particularly, I would have these following Truths laid to heart.

1. *Whilst thou art unconverted thou art also unpardoned.* Thou standest indebted many thousand talents, and not so much as one mite of all that debt is paid. The least transgression does make thee liable to the curse of the Law, and guess then what an accursed wretch thy many and thy mighty sins have made thee? Upon thy *returning & acknowledging of thy iniquity*, God has engaged to do it away, he will lay the load upon the back of a Mediator; but if thou wilt not consent to be turned, thou alone must bear it. Sin is another kind of thing than thou imaginest. *Adams* first transgression in eating the forbidden fruit, which was aggravated because he would have been as God; and he believed the Serpent, and made God a lyar, and which was indeed a rejecting of the whole Covenant of life made with him: Oh! how did it make himself to smart? and not only himself, but his whole progeny are the worse for it. And if one sin has brought a curse upon all the children of men; think, O soul, how thou wilt be able

able to stand under all the sins thou hast committed. Sin does make the whole Creation groan, it makes the damned to lament and to despair, and will be an intolerable load for ever; sin was found heavy by our Lord, this caused his Agony, and made his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Nay, God himself complains, that he is pressed with iniquity, as a Cart is pressed, which is full of sheaves. And wilt thou sinner make light of it? Oh! how heavy wilt thou one day feel it?

2. *Whilst unconverted thou art treasuring up more and more wrath against the day of wrath.* Thy scores are large already, but every day thou runnest on the score afresh; every day thou makest new wounds, though conscience now be so stupid that it feels nothing. As thy sin abounds, proportionably the vials of divine indignation grow fuller, which will at last be all emptied upon thy head. Unnatural cruelty to be a Devil to thy self! to be thy own souls murderer! Thou art continually setting thy self at a greater distance from God, and engaging him more and more against thee, who alone can be a refuge and salvation to thee. Thou wilt perceive

ceive at last, thou hast been thy own foe, and acted to thy own confusion, *Jer. 7. 19.* Do they provoke me to anger, saith the Lord, do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

3. *Whilst unconverted, thou renderest thyself more and more unfit for glory and blessedness.* The more impure thou art, the more unfit also to see God. The abominations which are loved and wrought by thee, do make thee an improper inhabitant for the new *Jerusalem*. The inheritance above is an inheritance of Saints, 'tis, as an incorruptible, so an undefiled inheritance, *1 Pet. 1. 4.* The company is all holy, and so are the employments. There is not a vain or sinful word spoken there; nor an impure desire or thought to be found in any that are above. And what wouldst thou do there among them, unless a change be wrought in thee.

4. *If thou turnest not thou art sure to die:* As life is far off, so death is near. The Psalmist tells us, *That God is angry with the wicked every day; and if he turn not, he hath whet his sword, he hath bent his bow and made it ready, Psal. 7. 11, 12.* And when the instruments of death are thus prepared, 'tis a sign God will make quick work, and sud-

denly cut the offender off. *Death* is called a *King of Terrors*; and it well deserves that name, in respect of the ungodly. Then their good things are all received, and the evils come upon them, which will never be removed; their torments begin, which will never know an end. *So long as God is God, to have God their enemy; so long as God is happy, to lye in extreamest misery!* What tongue can utter, or heart imagine the horror of this? An angry sin-revenging Lord will lay load upon thee, and yet keep thee from sinking into nothing; he will uphold thee in thy being, that thou mayest be for ever plagued. He will shew his mighty power, in holding thee up with one hand, that he may lash thee with the other, unto all eternity.

Use III. Of Consolation.

You who have obeyed the Call of God to turn, I am commanded to speak peace and comfort to you, *Isa. 40. 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.* The unconverted are not more accursed than you are blessed. I have several things to tell you, which are enough to make your hearts leap for joy.

1. God

1. *God hath had thoughts of love towards you before the foundation of the world was laid. He did predestinate and chuse you unto the adoption of children, Eph. 1. long before you were. From everlasting he did design to make you his Heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ unto that Kingdom and Glory, with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared. And since the love of God towards you is from everlasting, is co-eternal with himself, surely it can never in time be changed.*

2. *God hath justified you freely by his grace, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, Rom.*

3. 24. *As far as the East is from the West, so far are your iniquities removed from you,*

Psal. 103. 12. and surely that's as far as you can desire. They are cast into

the depth of the Sea; which argues, when they come to be sought for, they shall not be found;

just as those things which are cast into the depth of the Sea, we despair that

ever they should be recovered. Christ has been wounded for your transgressions, he has

been bruised for your iniquities, Isa. 53. 5. And as the Imputation of your sins to

Christ did cause him to undergo real sufferings; so, the imputation of his righ-

teousness to you, will cause a real exemption from that wrath and punishment which by sin you have justly merited. Be of good cheer Converts, your sins are forgiven, and consequently the curse of afflictions, and also the sting of death is taken away.

3. *You that are Converts it won't be long e're you are all glorified, Rom. 8. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified.* The Lord has promised, that those who overcome shall sit with him on his Throne. You shall not only overcome, but be *more than conquerors through him that has loved you.* Mansions are already prepared for you, and when you are prepared for those Mansions, you shall be received into them. Then, neither the fury nor the favour of the world will be a temptation. Satans fiery darts will not be able to reach you, when once you are gotten into the third Heaven. When you are just entring into the new *Jerusalem*, you will shake hands both with sin and misery at the door, and neither of these will be able to follow. *Tears will be wiped away, and all cause of sorrow will be gone; there will be*

be a clear view of God, without the least cloud; the Sun of righteousness will shine for ever without any eclipse, there will be intire joy without grief, perfect peace without any trouble, compleat holiness without the least remainder of corruption, a full blessedness without period—

Use IV. Of Exhortation.

And who would not now become a Convert? Have you any thing to say against a pardon, or against that glory which has been revealed? Shall it be made a question, whether pleasures for evermore, or eternal torments are to be preferred? Oh that you would come to your selves! and then I am sure you would come to God immediately.

The Arguments to perswade you to Conversion are divers.

1. *If you turn not, you cannot answer the end of your Creation.* You must not think God gave you a being, and sent you into the world, to please your selves, to satisfy your inordinate and corrupt desires, and to live carelessly and rebelliously against him; but thus you will do till you are converted. Did the Lord give you an un-

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derstanding faculty, and not design that he should be understood and known by you? Did he give you a memory, and not intend that he should be remembred? Did he give you an heart to love and to desire, and not design himself to be the chief object of both? Did he give you affections that you should give them away to sin and vanity? Oh cross not any longer the end for which you were made, lest you cause the Lord to repent and be grieved at the heart he made you, Gen. 6. 6. and so resolve to destroy the workmanship of his own hands. If you continue obstinate and without understanding, *He that made you will not save you, or have mercy on you; he that formed you will shew you no favour,* Isa. 27. 11.

2. Unless you turn, you cannot answer the end of the death of Christ, and the Redemption wrought thereby. Our Lord died not only to expiate offences, but also to purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and that in the body of his flesh, through death, he might present them holy and unblameable, Col. 1. 22. Through the eternal Spirit, he offered up himself without spot to God, that by his blood he might purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living

living God, Heb. 9. 14. From these and and such like places it evidently follows, that not only our pardon, but our purity was designed by the Lord Jesus. But how can we be pure, unless we turn to God from sin which does defile us? Christ knew what a sickness and debasement of our nature sin is; therefore he himself was slain, that sin might be killed. And will you dare to live in sin? Hark to the Apostle, *1 Pet. 2. 24.* *Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.* And as the death of Christ is an argument to perswade to turn from sin, so from this death vertue and power is to be derived, whereby sin may be subdued.

3. *You are further obliged to turn, because of Gods condescension in giving you leave to do it.* If the gulph had been fixed upon the very first transgression; if the turning of fallen man had been as impossible, as the turning of the fallen Angels; the Lord could not have been charged with the least injustice. But although you have departed; he calls after you. Without any detriment or prejudice to his justice, he has found out a way to shew you mercy.

The Devils were never called to conversion; as soon as ever they had sinned they were fettered in chains of darkness that shall never be unloosed. But hark what wisdom sayes, *Prov. 8. 4. Unto you, O men I call, and my vow is to the sons of man.* You have often stopt your ears, Oh that at last you would hear, that your souls may live. The long deafning of your ears may provoke the Lord to shut his mouth; and then you will never be converted, never healed.

4. Consider, *Who 'tis that calls upon you to turn; and what is his design in it.* You are undone wretches, who have neither skill, nor will, nor power to save your selves. And he that calls after you is a God to whom power and mercy does belong. And his design is to make his power and mercy known in you. His aim is, to bring you neer, that he manifest himself to you, as he does not manifest himself unto the world; to shield you from danger, to supply your needs, according to the riches of his glory, to deliver you from every evil work, and to preserve you to his heavenly Kingdom. And is there any harm in all this?

5. *'Tis unreasonable that the world or sin should*

should be an hindrance, and any longer stave you off from God. Well may you turn from sin, for that deserves your hatred; well may your hearts turn from idolizing the world and the things of it, for these deserve your scorn. All things besides God, are either hurtful or helpless. Nothing more hurtful than sin; and they that have expected help from the creatures, have found themselves destitute and forlorn in their extremity.

6. If you turn to God, he will not fail to turn to you. His ear shall be turned, and be open to your cry; his hand shall be upon you for good; and in the hollow of his hand you shall be secure; he is greater than all, and none shall be able to pluck you out of his hands; he will not hide, but turn his face towards you; he will give peace as well as mercy, he will let you know that pardon is multiplied, that your love also may be increased. The debtor loved much, to whom much was forgiven. Finally, the stream of his benefits shall be turned towards you. The Lord will do you good, and delight in doing so. Temporal things you shall not want, spiritual blessings shall be showred down abundantly, and at last you shall ascend, and be admitted

ted into his immediate presence, where God will turn to you, so as never to withdraw more. Be not afraid or dismayed whoever turn against you for conversion sake. The Lord himself is with you, and for you, and he will turn to good what adversaries do mean for evil.

7. *Not only his Word, and Ministers, and Spirit, but also his Providences call upon you to turn to God.* Both his mercies and his judgments do press this exhortation to conversion. The streams of goodness that continually run towards you, and which sometimes swell and overflow abundantly, do signifie that 'tis your wisdom to forsake the broken cisterns, and come to the fountain of living waters. His mercies speak this language, that 'tis good to return in-to, and obtain an interest in the Father of them. Then these mercies will be in mercy. Cords of love are cast about you on purpose to draw you unto the God of love and peace. Oh that you would run to him ! The riches of his goodness are unlocked and discovered, *that hereby you may be led unto repentance, Rom. 2. 4.*

His judgments likewise are inflicted in pursuance of the same design. That is the voice that's uttered by them; *Go return un-*

to the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal you; he hath smitten, and he will bind you up, *Hos. 6. 1.* The Fire of London calls upon the Inhabitants of it, and of the whole Land, since they have not only heard of God by the hearing of the ear, but their eyes have seen him marching out so dreadfully against them, to abhor themselves, and to repent in dust and ashes. Those many thousands which were cut off by the plague of Pestilence, although they are dead, they still speak; and that which they say is this. *Oh you that are alive, return, return unto the Lord your God, for after death 'twill be too late to do it.*

8. Consider, *As yet 'tis not too late to turn to God.* Though hitherto stupid, if now you will awake, though hitherto refractory; if now you will yield yourselves to the Lord, though hitherto you have shut the door to keep in sin, and to keep out Christ; if now at last you will open at the knock of the Gospel, and consent that your lusts should be expelled, and the Lord Jesus enter; he is ready to receive you into grace and favour, and all former denials, affronts, repulses, shall be forgotten and forgiven. The Scepter is still held forth, the Lord is not removed
from

from the Mercy-seat ; mercy and grace may now be had, if you will come for it. But if you will not know when you are well offered, and are resolved not to cease from your stubborn way ; an oath may soon be sworn in wrath, that you shall never enter into Rest ; and God may say, *He that's filthy, let him be filthy still ; he that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; he that is joyned to the profits and pleasures of the world which he makes his idols, let him alone ; he that despises the offer of grace, shall not have another offer ; he that now refuses to be converted shall never be a Convert.*

Oh that I could prevail by all these arguments. But lest they should take no impression, lest they should slip out of your minds, and have no influence upon your hearts, I shall second them.

With a voice from Hell.

With a voice from Heaven.

With a voice from Christ himself.

I. *With a voice from Hell.* Imagine therefore, a damned sinner, who has lain many years in the burning lake, should have leave to come and appear in the face of this assembly ; and a river of tears having first gushed out of his eyes, and for a while stopt his expressions, he at length should thus speak to you. *Cursed*

Cursed be the day wherein I was born, and that night wherein it was said there is a man-child conceived ! Let that day be darkness, let not God regard it from on high, neither let the light shine upon it. Alas, 'twere better never to have been at all, than to be for ever miserable ! How intolerable are the gnawings of the never dying worm ? how hot and unquenchable are those flames, which the breath of the Lord as a stream of brimstone doth kindle ?

The world is extremely mistaken in sin. They think it light and pleasant, and so I thought once, as well as they ; but now I find how wofully I was deceived ; I feel sins weight, and taste, yea am drunken with the gall and wormwood of it. I find that true, which before I was told, but would not believe, that 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. His mighty hands have taken hold of me, and bound me hand and foot, and thrown me into outer darkness.

And there I must lie tortured to Eternity ! Oh that word does rend my very heart, kills all hope, sinks and quite overwhelms me in utter desperation. If after millions of millions of ages my torments were to end, I should strengthen my self under my sorrows ; but since after so long a space of time I shall be as far from releasing, as the first moment I was im-
pri-

prisoned; this is that which makes my grief to know no bounds, because my misery knows none. Oh what phrenzy possess'd me, that for the sake of a little gain and pleasure, for a short season, which sin did yield me, I should venture to dwell with devouring fire, and to inhabit everlasting burnings!

But I must only blame my self; God is severe, but not in the least unrighteous. He called, but I refused, he stretched forth his hand, but I disregarded him, I set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproofs; I remember very well, he spake to me often to turn out of the paths that lead to destruction and misery; but I would needs go on. I was warned to flie from the wrath to come, but I would take no warning. I was intreated to be reconciled, but resolved to continue a rebel. I would not be made clean, though the Lord waited to be gracious, and frequently said, When will it once be!

And what! Will any of you continue in the same desperate mind that I was of? Will you still cherish the self-same sins for kind that were my undoing? Behold the flame about my ears, and oh that you could conceive the anguish of my heart! Be wise, be wise, and accept of mercy and salvation while 'tis rendered to you; for if once you come to this place of

torment, the Lord will forget to be gracious, and his mercy will be quite and clean gone for ever.

2. *A voice from Heaven.* Suppose one of the glorified Saints who has been an Inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem, who has conversed with an innumerable company of Angels, and has seen God face to face; should for a while leave his blissful Mansion, and having abundance of joy and glory in his looks, should utter such kind of language as this before you.

Oh the height, and length, and depth, and breadth of the love of Christ which passes knowledge! How unsearchable is his goodness, and his mercy past finding out! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for by his blood he has redeemed me, with millions more, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and Nation! I was called to turn and live, and through rich grace was enabled to obey the Call; and now I find what a glorious life that is, unto which sincere and persevering Converts shall at last be brought. This is a life that's free from sin, and free from suffering, that will never see death, or be in danger of the grave.

'Tis best of all to be neer to God. Christ is with-

without all controversie the best Master, to be subject to him it is to reign, and reign for ever ! What ails the blind and stupid world, that they see no form nor comeliness in this fairest among ten thousand, the light of whose countenance makes heaven not to need the light of the Sun, or Moon, or Stars ! His beauty is all-surpassing, his grace is much more precious than gold that perishes ; but his glory, 'tis not lawful, or possible for me to utter.

And now will any of you any longer slight him ? Open your eyes and see evidently that you are the children of perdition, the sons of death without him ; but through him you may be turned, through him you may be saved, with a great and everlasting sa'vation. Surely then you have reason to value him above all ; though the whole world, nay though ten thousand worlds should stand in competition with him.

3. Hear a voice from Christ himself. Imagine the Lord Jesus appearing with a light far above the brightness of the Sun. Suppose some of his Angels as his Harbingers and forerunners, coming before him, and crying, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts* ; and at last himself visibly filling this place with his Majesty and with his glory, and having stricken an awe into you, and wrought in you an admiration of his excellency

cellency and greatness, suppose him thus speaking and pleading with you.

Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth, I am your Redeemer, and there is none else; you have destroyed your selves, but in me, and me alone, you may find help; unless I make you free, sin will still reign in you, and if it reign, it will also ruine; unless I binde the strong man armed, he will keep you bound, and lead you captive at his pleasure; unless I turn, and bring you neer to God, you will run farther and farther away from him, till at last there be no possibility of returning. How long ye simple soules will ye love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.

Former contempts I will pass by, if now at last you will receive me. I will free you from the guilt, and from the power of sin, I will pacifie my Fathers anger, though by breaking his Law, and despising me his Son, you have never so much incensed him. Though by nature captives, I will make you Kings and Priests; though by sin traitors and enemies, I will make you Sons, and heirs of God, and coheirs with my self, who am the Heir of all things. You shall in no case be miserable, if all that fulness which dwells in me can satisfie and make you happy.

And

And after all this, my brethren, will you be fond of sin and ruine? Oh hear the voice of the Son of God, who is not willing you should perish.

How shall I do to work upon you? Methinks I could be willing that these words should be my last, upon condition they might be powerful and effectual to the converting, and healing, and saving all that are within the sound of them. Methinks I could be willing to expire here, and be carried dead out of the Pulpit, upon condition all you might hear, so as to turn from your evil wayes and live. Most of those thousands which are before me are unknown to me: But this I know, that you all have souls, and that every soul is worth a world. Oh that you all would consult your souls interest and safety!

But lest it should be in vain, if I only speak to you, I shall direct my words unto him who is Lord over all.

And oh that he who works, and none can let or hinder, would work a thorow saving change in you! Oh that he would pity those among you, who are unto your selves cruel! Oh that he would awaken the souls, that are not only asleep, but dead! and break the hearts which have made themselves as an Adamant stone!

Oh

Oh that he would convince you of your sin and misery, and effectually turn you from the one, that you may be for ever freed from the other !

To these Petitions let every heart say,
Amen!

Use V. Of Direction.

I would believe by this time, that you are willing to hearken unto, and likewise follow some directions, how to become sincere Converts. Directions how to get ease when you are in pain; how to recover health, when you are sick; or an estate which you have lost, I am confident would be heeded. And are not directions from the infallible word of truth, how to be turned and saved, of far greater consequence?

The Directions are these which follow.

1. *Think upon, and with a serious spirit consider your ways.* This Consideration had great influence upon the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not, &c.* That injunction is doubled, *Hag. 1. 5.* And again, *v. 7.* Thus

H

saith

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saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your wayes. And that passage, Ezek. 18. 14. is to be observed. Now lo, if he beget a Son that seeth all his fathers sins which he hath done, and considereth and doth not such like, &c. If sinners would but consider what they do, when they do evil, it would be a means to make them cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Consider the misery and danger of being at a distance from God. The wayes which naturally you walk in, do lead you away from him; and the Scripture sayes, Those that are far from God shall perish, he will destroy all them that go a whoring from him, Psal. 73. 27. Think of these things so long, till you find your hearts affected, so as to conclude it height of madness to lye secure in an unconverted state. Let this thought take deep impression. All the while thou persistest in thy evil wayes, thou forsakest the Lord, and forsakest thy own mercies, and art travelling apace to the regions of eternal wo and darkness.

2. *Study the vanity of former excuses. I know the natural mans mouth is very full of them, but 'tis very easie to answer them.*

Sin,

Sin, thou sayest, is rivited in thy very nature.

Therefore thou hadst need to cry to heaven, that thy nature may be changed, and to be made a new creature.

But sin is the commune practise.

Therefore thy danger is the greater, and thou shouldst be the more careful, lest thou be overwhelmed in that ruin that will be so general.

But my lusts are both profitable and pleasant, and why then should I abandon them?

Consider soul whether the damned who have lost their souls and eternal blessedness, and suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, have any reason to boast of gain or pleasure?

But men will deride and scorn me, if I become a Convert.

They that do so are besides themselves, and sober people use not to be concerned at the laughter of such as are out of their wits. Oh condemn their contempt, despise the shame they cast upon you; shortly they themselves will wish, that instead of scorning at, they had been imitators of you.

But to turn unto and follow God is very hard, and the difficulty is a very great discouragement.

The work is hard indeed, but the strength and assistance is great, which shall be afforded. The Lord will work all your works in you and for you, Isa. 26. 12. He commands nothing, but what he is ready to help you to perform himself.

But if I am a Convert, I shall never live a pleasant hour; my tears will be my meat and drink, and my sorrows my perpetual companions.

Oh gross mistake! and unreasonable prejudice against the wayes of holiness! If godliness be so melancholy a business; why does the Scripture tell us of peace which passeth all understanding, and joys that are unspeakable and full of glory? Why is David so often singing, so often harping, if mirth and Religion were *Ἀδύνατον*, altogether inconsistent.

Oh but if I turn, I shall be exposed to suffering.

Well, suppose thou art, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the present grace and consolation, which will attend thy trials, much less with the glory that shall be revealed.

Study the vanity of all such excuses.

3. Save your selves from the untoward generation you live among. This was the advice

vice the Apostle gave to them that had been awakened and *pricked in their heart*, *Act. 2. 40.* You must shake hands with your former brethren in iniquity, else they will be a great temptation and snare to you. Carnal company are incarnate devils, who endeavour to draw as many as they can to Hell along with them. Therefore the wisest of men does use so many words of caution, *Prov. 4. 14, 15.* *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.* Though you are not bound to be morose and uncivil towards the ungodly, take heed of being delightfully familiar. Many a conviction and good resolution has cooled and vanished, by our lighting into the society of the wicked. Suck not in any prejudices from them against true piety; and when they presume to prate against prayer, hearing, fasting, professing, when they quarrel against the Lord's day, and censure the Lord's people; look upon all this, but as the ravings of such as are in a spiritual sense distracted.

4. *Despise not Prophecys.* The Ministry of the Word is ordained on purpose
to

to work faith, and to turn sinners unto God; and therefore let not drowsiness, distraction, cares, or pleasures, or lusts, or the deceitfulness of riches choak this Word, and hinder it from prospering to this end whereunto it is appointed. When *Ezekiel prophesied over the dead and dry bones*, they presently revived, and a valley of dead bones became a living Army. And who knows while thou art prophesied over, by the Ministry of the Gospel, but of a sudden thou mayest be made alive, who wast dead in trespasses. Let powerful preaching be prized and frequented by you: Certainly the word has a converting power when 'tis set home, *Psal. 19. 7. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*

5. *Quench not the Spirit, 1 Thes. 5. 19.* His conviction you must not stifle, but improve. The Spirit of the Lord sometimes approaches very neer unto a drunkard, a swearer, a covetous worldling, an unclean person, and tells them, the way they take it is perverse before him, that there is but a step between them and death, between them and damnation; and there-

therefore moves them to humiliation, and to reformation. He informs them they had better leave their sins, than be undone for their sake. Now such convictions might be heightned into Conversion, if they were but closed with, and improved. But thousands resist the holy Ghost; they had rather be permitted to sin without disturbance, than to have the waters troubled, though upon stepping in, they might be healed, what ever their spiritual malady and plague be. Dost thou find the Spirit neer thee; Oh heed his checks, comply with all his motions, and beg that thou mayst not be put off with commune operations; but that a saving work may be wrought in thee!

6. *Lay hold upon and plead the Lords own Covenant.* In this Covenant he has engaged to give you a new heart, to cleanse you from your filthiness and your idols; to put his Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in his Statutes; that is, in one word to convert you, Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27. Be earnest that these promises may be accomplished. Resolve to take no nay, the Lord will be pleased with your importunity, in a matter which 'tis so much for his own
ho-

honour to grant you. You cannot turn your selves, but he can as easily do this work, as leave it undone. One word of life and power will raise you. And since he sayes, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil wayes, for why will ye die, O house of Israel;* presently make this Text into a prayer. *Turn us, turn us from our evil wayes, for why should we die, O thou God of Israel!*

FINIS.

